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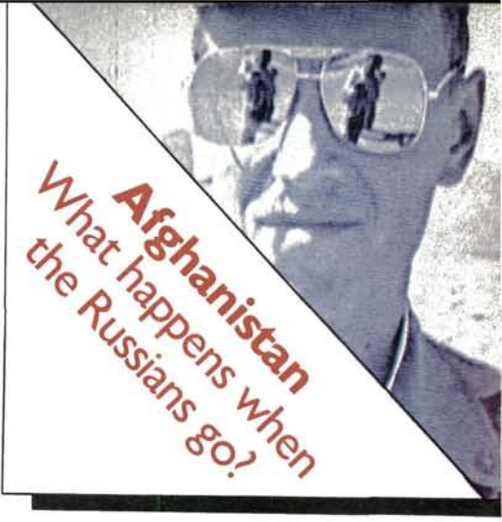

Afghanistan
What happens when the Russians go?

LABOUR POLICY REVIEW

DOES IT GO FAR ENOUGH?

Cover illustration: Fiona MacVicar

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Lawson v Thatcher: Will Hutton on an argument about how the world economy should be run. *Plus* science fiction writer Michael Moorcock defends Andrea Dworkin (attacked on p.22); Dr John Reid MP responds to criticism of Labour's policy review

On the Blimp

THE GOVERNMENT has no idea what to do about television — apart, that is, from bashing it. If nothing else, the decision to go ahead with the Broadcasting Standards Council makes that plain: here is another tier of regulation in a television system which the government is committed to de-regulate in the much-delayed white paper on broadcasting.

The new council's brief is to police sex and violence on television — "matters of taste, not matters of politics", as Douglas Hurd was quick to point out. But how will the thin blue line between the two be drawn? Matters of taste very soon become political, as we shall shortly see when the BBC shows *Tumbledown*, a forthcoming play about the Falklands adventure directed by Richard Eyre. The play will almost certainly be condemned on the grounds of violence. But the real objections will be political. "Taste" is, in fact, a synonym for political and cultural controversy.

The give-away here is the sensibility of the man appointed to chair the BSC. In a mature democracy it would be offensive for any single individual to be given the powers which the Home Secretary is conferring upon Sir William Rees-Mogg. It's worse still that the man ordained to blunder about in our lives should be a small-minded prude who knows as well as Mrs Thatcher what's good for us. The appointment does, however, show how the government plans to deal with the logistical problems of censoring the tide of imported material when we have something like 20 channels. Easy for Sir William; he was ready to condemn another BBC play, *Airbase*, without even seeing it.

But *will* there be 20 channels in the next five years? Here the government's fundamental confusion is revealed. If there are so many satellite channels, then the BSC will be able to do nothing about them, whatever statutory powers are heaped on it. Satellite channels are under the control only of the country from which the signals come. So Sir William's new organisation will just make any satellite entrepreneur think again about basing their operations in Britain.

In fact, the decision to set up Sir William as a cultural Colonel Blimp, all ready to repel an alien invasion of "imported fiction", is simply another reminder of the essential Little Englander qualities of Mrs Thatcher's regime. There are several European initiatives which are endeavouring to regulate satellite television. Both the EC and Council of Europe are trying to introduce minimum standards. The British government has not had a word to say about the content of programmes; instead, it is contesting quotas for European production. Internationally, then, it is the free-market strain of conservatism which triumphs; at home, it is the patriarchal.

As it happens, a growing body of opinion now believes that satellite TV, like cable, will be a non-starter. We are more likely to see a slow but steady growth of land-based, national channels. in such a case there simply isn't a logical argument for an institutionalised Mrs Whitehouse. Any role it can perform is already done — or could be done — by existing bodies; and broadcasting could simply be brought under the rule of law.

But there is of course a hidden agenda here. The BSC is the Son of Hungerford, or the Daughter of *The Singing Detective* or *The Monocled Mutineer*. It's a reaction to the moral panics about broadcasting which regularly now send the tabloid press and its mistress into frenzies of indignation. Television is now the single most powerful medium in our society, and "sex and violence" stands for the two areas of people's lives which remain defiantly outside the control of an increasingly authoritarian regime. Both put the kind of order which Mrs Thatcher and her Home Secretary would like to see at risk. Their display on television can offer powerful alternative ways of viewing our society and its past. *Something* must be done; and it has been.

That's not to say that broadcasting hasn't been too arrogant in dealing with people's complaints and fears. It most certainly has. But the current vogue for programmes expressing viewers' opinions, and the experiments in access television, show an openness to "bottom-up" change which could be built on. There is also a need for a body which monitors trends in broadcasting content across the system and acts as a forum for debate between broadcasters and concerned members of the public (of whatever tendency).

The whole point is to render less powerful those existing broadcasting institutions which even under the government's placemen, still demonstrate an unwelcome independence of judgment. The autonomy of all the institutions of a pluralist society — the BBC and IBA, the universities, the civil service, local authorities — is being gradually eroded; and imperfect as they often are from a purely democratic viewpoint, the freedoms of the British people are being correspondingly diminished. The trends are well-established, and have to be seen — and resisted — across the whole spectrum of public life.

But for now the simple fact is that here, as for example in local government, the rhetoric of de-regulation conceals a creeping centralism. We may now have a ninny to nanny broadcasting. But if this government runs true to form, then Sir William will be given more and more powers. □

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DIARY

I am writing under siege. I was woken this morning by a dawn chorus of F-111s screaming over the roof at fewer than 200 feet, and they have been at it ever since. Whenever these NATO exercises take place — and it feels like every few weeks — the ever-considerate United States Air Force posts a notice outside the village shop: "Residents may wish to note that during the period 16-20 May 1988 the 20TFW RAF [sic] Upper Heyford will conduct an exercise to test the operational capability of USAF in support of NATO. During this period there will be an increase in the flying activity between approximately 6am to midnight, although there may be flying outside these hours." Why not just say they'll be flying 24 hours a day?

There is more: "Other NATO air forces will carry out low-level simulated attacks on the airfield. Residents will notice an increase in activity on the station. Residents may also notice 19 Sqn personnel and their Rapier surface-to-air missile fire units in locations both on *and off the station*." (my italics). On Monday morning I conducted an extensive tour of local hedgerows but, as usual, found no Rapier missiles at all. If the Russians break down my door tomorrow night I shall be entirely defenceless.

○

Cyril Smith has announced that he will not stand for Parliament again. Has a single tear been shed at this news? Has there been wailing and gnashing of teeth? I doubt it. The miracle is that this worthless lout has survived as long as he has. The explanation, I suppose, is his crafty exploitation of the "cuddly old Cyril" persona, which has caused Fleet Street (and the electorate) to overlook his politics. After watching him for many years I am still mystified by his claim to Liberalism. On almost any issue you care to name, his instinctive views are those of a right-wing Conservative. His most recent parliamentary contribution was entirely fitting: last Friday he accused MPs who spoke in favour of back-seat safety-belts for children of being "people who believe in murder in the womb". Why so? Because their speeches left no time for the reintroduction of David Alton's anti-abortion Bill.

Cyril's past concern for children is well documented. In the early 1960s he was instrumental in setting up and running Cambridge House, a hostel for teenage boys in Rochdale. Many years later, some of the boys gave sworn affidavits to *Rochdale's Alternative Paper* in which they described the big man's methods of pastoral care. Here is the recollection of one boy, who was 15 when he stayed at the hostel:

> He told me to take my trousers and pants down and bend over his knee. He trapped my hands between his legs. He hit me many times with his bare hand and I pleaded with him to stop because it was hurting me . . . Afterwards he came to my bedroom and wiped my buttocks with a wet sponge.

If only the lad had still been a foetus. Then, of course, Cyril wouldn't have laid a finger on him.

○

After a short lull, hostilities have been resumed in the joust between the *Sunday Times* and Sir Peter Hall of the National Theatre. Two years ago Hall sued the *Sunday Times* for libel. Now the *Sunday Times* is threatening to sue him: it claims that he libelled the paper by saying that its story about him was libellous. Clear?

The paper's original complaint about Hall was the size of the percentage he was taking from shows he had directed. But now there is a new charge. "It must have been either naivety, shallowness of conviction or something in the water which made him go through three political parties," the paper sneered earlier this month, referring to the fact that Hall voted Labour in 1974, Tory in 1979 and Alliance in 1983. Oddly enough, this voting history corresponds precisely with that of Brian MacArthur, executive editor of the *Sunday Times*. Something else in the water, I expect.

○

For years the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement has had its office in the tower of St Botolph's in Aldgate, East London, with the full approval of the rector and the parochial church council (see *NS*, 22 January). But a few months ago the Archdeacon of London, a nasty piece of work called George Cassidy, began proceedings to have it evicted. After three hearings *in camera* before an ecclesiastical court presided over by the Chancellor of the Diocese of London, George Newsome, the LGCM decided last week to bow out gracefully and seek offices elsewhere. The Movement says it wanted to save the rector of St Botolph's from being dragged into the scrum. But I suspect it may also have been influenced by clues suggesting that the judge's attitude was a teensy bit unreconstructed. At one of the private hearings, a month ago, he made a gruff reference to homosexuals as "poofs and pansies". Judge Newsome is 78.

○

"Throughout history, priests, politicians, despots, bigots, dictators and any organisation or state whose sole existence has depended on total conformity have always recognised and dreaded the power of books," thunders a leaflet which has dropped on to my desk. "They have banned, suppressed, confiscated or burned them. Their authors, printers, distributors and readers have been threatened with ridicule, exposure, disgrace, torture, excommunication or death. For books can kindle dreams, wither bigotry, shatter illusions, change men's ideas and topple empires." A promotion campaign for *Index on Censorship*? A new edition of *Areopagitica*?

Not quite. The leaflet is from the Unusual Books Company of Stockport, soliciting orders for its empire-toppling new volumes — *The Confidential Racing Guide*, *Starbucks Book of Names and Numbers*, *The Invisible Hand*, *The Ultimate Personal Success Programme*. Oh, and *How To Achieve Sexual Ecstasy Today and Every Day*.

○

I'm interested to learn that the young man running the Freedom Association's campaign to have the National Union of Students wound up is one Robert Chambers. I'm even more interested to hear that he works for Julian Lewis's extreme right-wing propaganda outfit Policy Research Associates as well. This couldn't be the same Robert Chambers who, as Secretary-General of the British Section of the International Society for Human Rights, had a letter printed in the *New Statesman* on 8 April boasting of its independent, neutral, apolitical view of the world?

It could be; and it is.

○

Late news: it's now after midnight and the USAF is still "buzzing" my house in support of NATO. I rang the base a minute or two ago and was put through to a Major Swaggart in the command post. Could he tell me how long this bombardment was going to continue? "No sir." But surely he must know whether it would finish soon or go on until dawn? "Yes sir, but I'm not authorised to give you that information." Why not? "Because it's none of your business." At this I suggested that it was my business — and, knowing these air force boys' taste for rough language, I added: "It's my fucking country." The major met the challenge brilliantly. "Sir," he replied, his voice as flat as Norfolk and as sweetly innocent as Shirley Temple. "If you want to talk to me, could you keep it clean?"

Francis Wheen

ROGER WODDIS

Stick in the eye

"As a succession of ministers and (more especially) ex-ministers can testify, poking burnt sticks in the eyes of their colleagues is more or less the norm in Mrs Thatcher's way of running her Cabinet." — Ian Aitken in the Guardian

Being jailor, judge and jury
So affects my working day
That I can't contain my fury
At the Nurds who say me nay.
They complain that I don't heed them,
But their's not to reason why,
And the only way to lead them
Is to poke them in the eye.

My sense of hearing's not acute,
I listen not at all
(I wouldn't know *The Magic Flute*
from *Phil the Fluter's Ball*).
But my eyes can spot a rabbit,
And if theirs don't look devout,
Then what's always been my habit
Is to poke the buggers out.

Now Nigel tells me we're to stick
Each radical reform
(The way I got on Tebbit's wick
Is more or less the Norm).
The trouble now is finding those
On whom I can rely;
The only way's by blinding those
Who don't see eye to eye.

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Death of a nuclear physicist

A REPORT from Moscow last week (13 May, Reuter) that Valeri Legasov, head of the Soviet government commission that investigated the Chernobyl disaster, had committed suicide passed without comment in the British press. The official obituary, signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders, had not disclosed the cause of Legasov's death on 27 April. That was left to an official from the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine some two weeks later.

The 51-year-old eminent physicist was at the height of his career: a member of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, professor at Moscow State University, winner of the Lenin prize and, most importantly, first deputy director of the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy. He had been a passionate advocate for the rapid development of atomic electricity stations in the European part of the Soviet Union, and his conviction seemed unshaken by the Chernobyl disaster.

Less than two months after the accident, while firemen who had fought the blaze over the station's number four reactor lay dying in Moscow and Kiev hospitals, he wrote in *Pravda:* "I am convinced that these atomic stations are the pinnacle of power engineering's achievements. . . I am convinced that atomic power engineering will emerge even more reliable from this ordeal." Naturally, he was the ideal candidate to head up both the government's investigating commission and its delegation to the August 1986 Vienna review conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Why then, this sudden and tragic end to Legasov's life? He was among the first team of specialists to arrive at Chernobyl station, hours after the reactor blew up. He worked there tirelessly, directing the emergency effort. In a booklet reviewing the disaster published last year by Novosti Press, Legasov wrote that "my working day began in 7.30 in the morning and ended at midnight. But sometimes I had to put in an additional hour or hour and a half." So it cannot be ruled out that he unavoidably absorbed a dangerously high dose of radiation. Its deleterious impact upon his health, combined with the mental stress that is regularly observed workers in the contaminated zone, may have contributed to the decision to end his life.

There is another, perhaps more plausible, explanation for the suicide of a physicist so influential in the Soviet nuclear establishment. Zhores Medvedev notes in the just-published book *Something in the Wind: Politics after Chernobyl* (Pluto Press) that Valeri Legasov "was particularly active in asserting the complete safety of nuclear energy". Together with Anatoli Alexandrov, head of the Kurchatov Institute, he made sure that the safety problems of nuclear power were not aired on the pages of the industry's journal *Atomnaya Energiya*. Therefore, he may well have felt responsible in some way for the Chernobyl disaster and, in the end, could not himself emerge from the ordeal.

Marko Bojcun

Marko Bojcun is co-author with Viktor Haynes of "The Chernobyl Disaster" (The Hogarth Press, 1988), to be reviewed next week.

Australian neighbours: a new utopia

WHILE ONE generation has spent the last few weeks endlessly reliving the events of the late 1960s, another sits nightly watching a vision of a collective lifestyle that is as utopian as any of the fanciful imaginings of 1968. I'm talking of course, about *Neighbours*. As even the most casual viewer of this Antipodean soap opera will know, the inhabitants of Ramsay Street practically live in a commune. OK, so the characters may have their own homes. But do they spend any time in them? Hardly; their entire social, sexual and emotional life takes place in one another's living rooms. The drama of the everyday unfolds as people open their hearts to one another in the obligatory open-plan kitchens of soap opera.

Whether the households and characters of *Neighbours* are credible or not is irrelevant in view of its phenomenal success. Since earlier this year when it transferred to its teatime slot, it has gained audiences of up to 16 million, rivalling *EastEnders* as the nation's most popular programme. Formerly derided as a cheap and cheerful part of daytime scheduling, *Neighbours* has now been completely woven into the popular consciousness. Its stars are now pin-ups in *Smash Hits*, have number one records and reveal all to *Women's Own*. We knew that it had been *officially* accepted into our national culture when its cast started appearing on the Wogan show.

Wogan, like many critics, makes the mistake of tarring all soaps with the same brush — as a rather silly mixture of fantasy and familiarity. Soap opera is in fact a wonderfully elastic form. *Neighbours* bears about as much relation to *Dynasty* as it does to *Newsnight*. Like our home-grown *EastEnders* it has many teenage characters which guarantee its huge youth audience, yet it has very little else in common with the other English soaps. For *EastEnders* and *Brookside* deal with social, even political issues which reflect the reality of contemporary life — for instance abortion, rape, drugs, defrauding the DHSS, AIDS in a way that often highlights the injustices and inconsistencies of Thatcherism.

Instead *Neighbours* operates at a purely personal level so that problems are always looked at morally rather than politically. As the theme song says all you need is a "little understanding". ▷

NEW STATESMAN

HEART ON FIRE, BRAIN ON ICE

On 10 June *New Statesman* will be reincarnated in a higher form — or at least in a larger and stronger magazine. That's the date for the merger of *New Statesman* and *New Society* — which will give you 50 per cent more pages every week for the same price, just £1.

We'll remain a magazine of dissent and scepticism, ready as ever to ask the awkward question or provoke political outrage, to raise new ideas or insist on old ideals.

But we'll add the qualities of *New Society*: illuminating "state of the nation" reportages, regular writers as diverse as Amanda Mitchison and R.W. Johnson, Sally Vincent and Colin Ward, an award-winning team of specialist writers on housing, education, the inner city, benefits and public services.

There will be a new Society section, bringing together the hard facts and analysis necessary to analyse what's going on in Britain. We will continue to be both more European and cosmopolitan in outlook, with brilliant and radical reporters like Alexander Cockburn, Susan George and Daniel Singer, and world-respected thinkers like Noam Chomsky and Agnes Heller.

Politics is too important to be left to men. Watch out for Sarah Benton, our "new girl at St Stephen's" — she'll be writing a regular weekly column from Westminster — and new columnists like Sheila Rowbotham and Ann Oakley. But we'll still find room for John Lloyd's hard-hitting columns and a new series of political essays by Ben Pimlott.

Our cultural coverage will be expanded to give a new emphasis to television and the media alongside what is already the most insightful and passionately engaged arts reviewing in Britain. We'll continue to explore intellectual debates, human dilemmas and cultural politics in essays and interviews. Coming soon: Andre Gorz and the new politics.

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People aren't bad just misunderstood. Juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, multiple sclerosis can all be made better by love, apart from the odd "barbie" in the garden we never see anything but the interiors of people's houses. For all I know the whole thing could be filmed in Margate.

If all the interior shots look remarkably similar, then it is equally difficult to work out who belongs to which family. Ultimately it does not matter, once you realise after a few episodes that Ramsay Street is actually a sort of communal housing co-op with a commitment to co-parenting. *Neighbours* returns us to the original definition of the word family, which meant all the members of one household regardless of blood relations.

If the caption fits

No 68

There's nothing like a bit of solidarity amongst the chaps for stirring Mrs Thatch to screams and tantrums in public. What are the dynamic duo saying to each other to keep their spirits up before the storm? Something about the pound being safe with us, perhaps? Over to you. Entries on a postcard please, to be in by Friday 27 May. Ten-pound book token for the winner as usual.

No 66: Winner

Tariq Ali (1968): " . . . I shall say this only once." *(Tim Beacham, London.)* Runners up: "Only after the Bandung File, comrades, the revolution . . ." *(Philip Marlow, Oxford.)*

It is precisely this vision of an imaginary community that is one of *Neighbours*' key pleasures. It has to be said though that the programme suggests Australia's infamous "Keep Australia White" policy has worked. While the British and American soaps feel duty bound to reflect however superficially a multi-racial society, *Neighbours* obviously feels no such compulsion — there are no Italians or Greeks never mind aboriginal people here.

So the fantasy of community offered in *Neighbours* is suburban, untroubled, affluent and white with the benefit of Australian sunshine. It is also therefore a mundane and restrictive view of an ideal community. Nonetheless the massive popularity of the programme illustrates how seductive the dream of living more collectively in a caring community can be. Unharnessed as it is to any political goal, this free-floating desire serves to remind us of the huge potential of such an idea. Until we can articulate politically a sense of community that is as powerful and pleasurable we will have to carry on importing it twice daily from Australia.

Suzanne Moore

Talk of takeover: should the smarties back it?

WHO SHOULD own Kit Kat, After Eight and Smarties? The question may not detain Britain's chocolate guzzlers as they put away £3 billion of sweets a year, yet it is increasingly likely to trouble our legislators as the choc wars come to a head.

Lord Young, the Industry Secretary, will have to decide soon whether to refer to the Monopolies Commission the hostile bid by Swiss firm Nestlé for Rowntree, the York-based company. Labour at Westminster thinks he should.

Yet the attack on Rowntree has so far failed to generate the heat unleashed when BTR, a British conglomerate renowned for predatory takeovers, tried to carve up the Lancashire-based glass makers, Pilkington. So great was the row that BTR had to bow out less than gracefully early last year.

Partly this is a difference of timing: BTR's bid came in the run-up to the election and after widespread concern about City short-termism. Partly too it is down to the companies: Pilkington waged a nimble public relations campaign, while Rowntree's has been treacly.

But it also appears to reflect general hesitancy on how takeovers should be judged. Most of the running on Rowntree has been made by MPs with a solid constituency interest in defending the status quo. This is not altogether surprising, since takeovers raise complex issues often pulling in different directions.

For Lord Young and the Tories, competition is the guiding star. This may stick in Labour's gullet, but competition is a good thing. Just ask travellers on Britain's express coach services whether they would like to go back to the days when National Bus had a monopoly. But in fact a Nestlé takeover of Rowntree would not be anti-competitive either in Britain or in Europe as together they still would not have a dominant market share.

Much has rightly been made of Swiss companies' barriers to hostile takeovers. Kenneth Clarke, the Industry Minister, advanced the hilarious argument in the Commons last week that the Swiss, whose standard of living soars above ours, have wounded their economy in consequence.

On the contrary, they have kept firm control of their leading companies in the era of footloose capital. But reciprocity cannot often be wheeled out as an argument against. It would not apply if General Cinema, the US company which has built up an 18 per cent stake in Cadbury, were to launch a hostile bid.

It is in Britain's interests to maintain a free flow of capital. British companies have been making aggressive acquisitions overseas, particularly in the US. And rightly so, since Britain is a hopelessly small base for any company which is after a place in the world league.

Yet while Labour should support competition and open markets, other considerations can be overriding, as even this government has implicitly recognised by referring Kuwait's passive 22 per cent stake in BP to the Monopolies Commission. The question is whether it would be fundamentally damaging to Britain's industrial interests to see a company accounting for 26 per cent of Britain's sweet market pass under foreign control.

Employment is one factor relevant to the national interest, especially since Rowntree is one of the few multinationals based in the north. But it is hard to rest a case on it, since it is often difficult to see which management team will be best at preserving jobs: Rowntree was itself planning to shed some.

What the left should never do is try to judge whether a company *deserves* protection from takeover. That would put them at the mercy of a skillful lobbying campaign by the existing management which would invariably concentrate on the purely short-term prospects for employment.

David Thomas

David Thomas is a journalist on the Financial Times.

New jungle for Jane

Chris Dawes

FOR NINE years now the *New Statesman*'s voice on the telephone has been unfailingly warm and considerate. Jane Thomas, our editorial assistant, has been a rock of calm assurance under four editors (Bruce Page, Hugh Stephenson, John Lloyd and Stuart Weir), and a good friend to countless contributors. But she's now been filched away from us by another past editor, Anthony Howard, who infiltrated the *NS* offices under the guise of carrying out research for his biography of Richard Crossman. Jane is leaving to join him at the *Observer*. The rat. ●

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Challenge to Education Bill falls

FOR PROTAGONISTS in the argument on the role of a second chamber in parliament, the House of Lords' debate on the Education Reform Bill has provided ammunition for both sides.

There were celebrations last week when opposition peers ambushed the government and won a vote to make it more difficult for schools to opt out of local education authority control — a fundamental element of the Conservatives' stated intention to increase parental choice. But there were recriminations this week when their Lordships responded in overwhelming numbers to the harrying of Conservative whips to vote decisively for the abolition of the ILEA.

Apart from the vote on schools opting out, opposition parties have failed to win any significant alteration to the main aims of the Bill. The national curriculum will go ahead, taking up around about 70 per cent of school time and, thanks to the intervention of the churches, guaranteeing religious education and the place of Christian worship in schools.

The Opposition victory on opting out is expected to be shortlived. Education secretary Kenneth Baker indicated immediately after the vote that he would use the Tory majority in the House of Commons to reverse the Lords' decision. But it now looks as if the Tories think they may have bitten off more than they can chew in going for what some Lords described as the hasty and ill-thought-out decision to abolish the ILEA.

The implications of some of the hated left-wing boroughs controlling their own education services have begun to sink in. In the debate on Tuesday it was announced that Kenneth Baker would take control of all senior appointments made by the Inner London boroughs when setting up their education departments. This has added yet another power to the hundreds the Secretary of State has arrogated to himself in the Bill.

To ease some of the concern expressed by Tories as well as opposition politicians that devolution to the boroughs will not ensure that the low standard and high costs ILEA is accused of perpetrating will be reversed, the Tories also intend to make grants available for boroughs to employ more school inspectors.

Nor has the government yet worked out how poorer boroughs will be able to fund their education service. The ILEA collects and redistributes money ensuring that areas of high deprivation and need are subsidised by wealthy boroughs.

Tory leader of the House of Lords Lord Belstead said in the abolition debate that "the exact details still have to be worked out". But the likely effect of abolishing the ILEA will be prohibitively high costs or a reduction in the quality of the education service available to Londoners.

Mrs Thatcher is behind Mr Baker all the way — determined to push the Bill through unchanged. The House of Lords, despite those who would wish to abolish it, was the last hope for the ILEA as it was for the GLC. Now, however, it is clear the revolutionary reorientation of this country's education service will be pushed through parliament warts and all, no matter what anyone else says.

Celia Weston

POLITICAL SKETCH

The Groin, the Dove and the Cement-mixer

Edward Pearce

THE APPOINTMENT of Sir William Rees-Mogg as comptroller and surveyor general of the nation's morals and a discussion of the asphalting over of rural England make for a happy afternoon's work under the Thatcher regime.

The trouble is that Roy Hattersley could go six rounds in the ring with Sir William for light-heavyweight sanctimoniousness. There is something about being denounced by Roy which gives Tories a warm feeling.

Even so Mr Hurd looked unhappier than usual, very anxious to stress that he was only interested in sex and violence. The beauty of sex and violence is that they are not very exciting, politically that is. There are all sorts of Tories, for whom Mr Hurd is a miserable constitutional Milksop, who would dearly like to pre-censor all political programmes — remember Mr Whitney and his comparison of Duncan Campbell on TV with a criminal on the loose? There are a lot of repressive urges on the government backbenches and Mr Hurd, to be fair, dislikes giving in to them.

Hence the preoccupation with sex and violence, small therapeutic bones for the ravening Sir William to gnaw before some more "radical" Tory throws him *Panorama*. Imagine a John Moore rewrite, an anxious-to-please nominee, elected for the Home Office by the Prime Minister from her handbag, how would *he* amend Sir William's powers? Mr Hurd is sometimes derided as a paper dove unable to deliver on all his liberal instincts. But try to imagine Mr Parkinson at the Home Office working hard for the succession and the present incumbent looks good. Also thank God for the diversionary potential of sex and violence. One or two backbenchers asked for more, Mr Howarth who had an unpleasant experience and who doesn't run to much liberality anyway and the repulsive Michael Fallon, a prim, over mature thirty-five going on sixty who demanded supervision of the BBC's "responsibility". Nobody mentioned the nanny state!

But the intervention of the day came from Richard Shepherd of honourable memory for his Official Secrets Bill. "Wasn't it odd that when we had given up the Lord Chamberlain in the theatre, we should now be getting him back on the box? Also would his Hon. Friend please go *very* cautiously on Sir William's demands for pre-censorship." It is a depressing thought that Rees-Mogg of all people should have been given a job, unsafe in anybody's hands, and quite frightening in his.

However, he will doubtless endeavour to give satisfaction. (Brian Wilson in a golden phrase described him as "the groin of the nation". What can one expect of a man with at least three aliases. He is variously Oliver Edwards, under which name he wrote an amiable but undistinguished column of literary chat in his period editing *The Times*. As a boyhood acquaintance of Simon Raven, who seems to have liked him like brilliantine added to gin, he has been crucified for years in the "Alms for Oblivion" novels as Somerset Lloyd James, Welsh creep and ingratiator, a sort of public school George Thomas with added (and libellous) sexual adventures, and finally, at the hands of David Hare, he became, in *Pravda*, Fruit-Norton, the newspaper executive on auto-cringe of whom a character says: "Let me explain his importance. Mickey Mouse wears a Fruit-Norton watch." Perhaps we can put it best by frankly conceding that for the purposes of freedom as Mrs Thatcher understands it, Sir William would make the perfect chairman of a commission of enquiry into the Gibraltar shootings.

HOWEVER, as it says in the limerick, "life wasn't all singing hymns". When it came to the action organised by Mr Sydney Chapman on the green belt we got less of a debate than a sacred cantata. The thought occurs that Nicholas Ridley, in his usual scornful way (Godolphin Horn on a bulldozer), has affronted middling Tories in the sort of way given to no one else.

Actually, when it comes to affronting Tories, eat your heart out Arthur Scargill. Mr Ridley's view of the green belt as something unnecessarily preoccupying a bunch of parochial ruralists and obstructive suburbanites, both of whom should get out of the way of the earth remover of history, is at odds with every known Conservative ideal and interest. His dismissal of them as a bunch of "nimbys" (not in my backyard) misses the huge reservoir of low motives which blessedly stand in the way of the man of the future riding on a white building licence. The South of England is carpeted with cherished backyards.

There are genuine lovers of the countryside to be sure, but there are also people living in large houses who want to stop the heavy access of people living in small houses. There are the representatives of broadleaved suburbs who, having something nice, wish to go on having it. I spoke of a cantata. Speaker after speaker followed the rumpled, pleasant Mr Chapman, a planner by trade, to put in their two pennyworth of discreet Ridley-bashing.

Another first for Great Asphalter-over has been his taste for riding over Conservative district and county councils. Mr Chapman reminded us of the joys of greater Tokyo — wall to wall people for a thirty-mile radius. Mr Johnson-Smith talked of a concrete jungle from Kent to Somerset and from Hampshire to Cambridgeshire. They were at it all afternoon like the vision of Banquo's descendants. Everyone is mindful that England is a very little country. Only the dreadful Fallon, intervening with a quip about the "Southern Comfort Lobby" offered loyalty. But then as nobody plans to extend his Darlington into Swaledale, he would wouldn't he.

The joy of this one is that the Minister is sawing against the Tory grain and a double row of brass nails. At a time when rational self-interest makes great numbers of Conservatives surprisingly green, Mr Ridley has opted to be the leader of the greyish white movement. The colour he nails up is the colour of cement. □

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Fractured silence behind NATO deals

THE MEETING of NATO defence ministers, which ended on 28 April in Brussels, issued a characteristically bland communiqué asserting NATO unity on the question of modernisation of NATO nuclear weapons. Women parliamentarians from NATO nations, who held shadow meetings of their own in Brussels, discovered something of the ferment and disagreement going on behind the apparent unanimity of the the communiqué.

The women leaders' meeting produced nine questions which they then put individually to their national defence ministers, interviewing them before and during the NATO meeting.

The Norwegian Defence Minister Johan Holst told Norwegian MP Tora Haug that Norway is uniting with Spain, Canada and Germany to find ways of deferring specific decisions on the modernisation of NATO's battlefield and short-range nuclear weapons. At the NATO summit last month, only Germany appeared to oppose Mrs Thatcher's determined championing of the modernisations. Specifically, Norway does not want sea-launched cruise missiles placed on the surface ships of either superpower in her waters.

The Belgian defence minister stunned women senators and MPs by saying that Belgium had never been asked to be part of a decision on this issue. Italian Minister of Defence Valerio Zanone told MEP Luciana Castellina that decisions on modernisation do not concern Italy — that they depend on talks between the USA and USSR. However, on the question of stationing of the F-16 fighters recently rejected by Spain, he said a decision would be forthcoming very soon. The only problem remaining to be sorted out between Zanone and US defence secretary Carlucci is the question of who is going to pay for their re-location in Italy.

The second major issue to emerge from these remarkable encounters is that the actual decisions taken at NATO meetings are not being reported to, much less debated by, the parliaments of NATO nations. The communiqué issued after the Montebello meeting of NATO defence ministers in 1983, for example, described the removal of 1400 warheads from NATO's tactical arsenal, but did not report the crucial second half of the decision, namely that specific new nuclear weapons systems were to be introduced. It is these new systems, described by NATO as modernisations, which are now causing so much trouble.

For four years, British defence ministers have consistently maintained that no decisions on modernisation were taken at Montebello. But George Younger, when pressed recently by MPs Joan Ruddock, Clare Short and Joan Walley, admitted that Britain had "an undertaking under Montebello in 1983 to modernise nuclear artillery". None of the range of decisions on new nuclear weapons has been debated in the British parliament. And none of the defence ministers interviewed would give a guarantee of a full parliamentary debate on the modernisation programme.

This absence of parliamentary accountability comes at a time when public opinion in Europe appears to be firmly in favour of negotiations to reduce nuclear weapons, and to be turning against different aspects of NATO nuclear policy. Spain has forced the removal of all F-16 fighters; West German public opinion, irrespective of party allegiance, is against modernisation of battlefield nuclear weapons; and the Danish government was forced to call a snap election on the issue of nuclear weapons on NATO ships visiting Danish ports. In Britain, a recent poll showed that 65 per cent of those interviewed, including 51 per cent of Conservative voters, want NATO to start negotiations for further reductions rather than modernise existing weapons.

All this has happened very fast. Only a couple of months ago, public opinion was still bathed in the euphoria of the INF agreement. Real disarmament, it seemed, had come at last. Now doubt has set in as to what NATO is really doing. The women parliamentarians reported that their constituents could not and would not accept the cynicism of decisions on new weapons being made over their heads and without consultation.

Scilla Elworthy McLean

The author is Director of Oxford Research Group and will appear on Channel 4's "Dispatches" on 27 May.

WestEnders
SIR!! SIR!! COULD YOU EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT "OVERHEATING" MEANS, PLEASE??
CERTAINLY! IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH THE WEATHER, Y'KNOW!!
HAHA! QUITE!
NO, "OVERHEATING" IS A DIRECT RESULT OF FRICTION INSIDE BROKERS' SUITS.....
SQUEAK
WE ALL KNOW THAT THIS IS A SIGN OF OUR COUNTRY'S BOOMING ECONOMY!!!
...WHICH AS EVERYBODY KNOWS IS CREATING MORE AND MORE REAL JOBS.....
EXPERIENCED HAIRHEAD JUGGLERS NEEDED
WANTED STOCKBROKER'S MATE EC1 DISTRICT
INDENTURED SERVANTS REQUIRED ISLE OF DOGS AREA
EXPERIENCED WHEELBARROW HANDLERS ISLE OF DOGS AREA
...AND GENERATING MORE AND MORE WEALTH WHICH IN TURN CREATES MORE AND MORE JOBS.....
...HOWEVER...
CHINK CHINK
SECURITY GUARDS WANTED
PLODS MAKE MORE FUN
SQUEAK
THIS PUTS UPWARD PRESSURE ON THE POUND WHICH IN TURN PUTS DOWNWARD PRESSURE ON INTEREST RATES, WHICH PUTS UPWARD PRESSURE ON LABOUR COSTS WHICH PUTS DOWNWARD PRESSURE ON UNEMPLOYMENT, WHICH IS INFLATIONARY!!!!!
EEEEK
NOW, IF YOU RECALL, MY PREDECESSOR SIR GEOFFREY HOWE'S CENTRAL CATCHPHRASE WAS THE ONE WHICH SPOKE OF THE NEED TO "SQUEEZE INFLATION OUT OF THE SYSTEM" BY RAISING INTEREST RATES, BANKRUPTING INDUSTRIES AND THROWING PEOPLE OUT OF WORK. THAT WAS HOW HOWE CONQUERED INFLATION!
GRUNT
SO...ER...WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN, IN A NUTSHELL, AS IT WERE???
WE NEED MORE UNEMPLOYMENT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE JOBS!!!
SQUEAK
20·15·5·88 – THANKS TO NIGEL PRENTER
© Steve Bell 1988 – "I don't know anything about Economics, but I know what I like"

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BEN PIMLOTT

Democrats' choice: the matinee idol gamble or "boring" Beith

DOES THE leadership of the SLD, or the Democrats, or the born-again Liberals matter a whit? It is tempting to think not, and to regard the coming contest as the non-event of the parliament. Trailing in the polls, battered in the local elections, the centre of the spectrum seems firmly back where it belongs, as an aimiably obscure also-ran tendency, suitable for people not really interested in power.

Such a view is tempting, but actually quite wrong. In the first place, though the SLD is down, the small print of the local results reveals scope for rapid recovery. In the second place,the electorate's emphatic rejection of David Owen largely disposes of the Democrats' biggest headache. Third, experience shows that however small its vote and representation, the fulcrum position of the centre party in British politics gives it, and its leader, a disproportionate influence.

Whatever else may be said about David Steel, there is no disputing his place in the history books as a politician who has affected the course of events. It is impossible to say whether another Liberal leader would have sustained Labour in power for so long in the late seventies (long enough to get decisively trounced in 1979), would have nurtured, with such initial success, the birth of the Alliance, or would have acted against Owen with such surgical swiftness after the last election, having dithered so ineffectually before it. But it is certainly possible to write a very different version of the past twelve years in British politics, if one starts with the assumption that some other MP had succeeded Jeremy Thorpe.

The leader matters in particular because, far more than with the two main parties, the public image of the centre is bound up with the personality of its chief standard-bearer. Labour is the party of the working class, the regions, the unions, council tenants, the poor, the public sector, bleeding-heart intellectuals; the Conservatives are the party of big business, small business, the South East, owner-occupiers, the local squire, the WI and people with the name of their house branded on a piece of sliced log. That much everybody knows. But the Liberals/Alliance/SLD/Democrats? Here there is just confusion, and an identification with the comfy sense of niceness which past leaders have managed to convey.

WHO THEN should the Democrats choose? What constitutes a good leader depends on your stand-point. The best leader in one sense may be the worst in another: Mrs Thatcher and Neil Kinnock would each be happiest with the candidate least likely to lead the new party into their own ideological and electoral backyard. From the viewpoint of the opinion pollsters, and many exasperated Democrat candidates, "good" may be judged largely in terms of vote-pulling capacity. But there are also theological, and cultural issues involved: above all the question of the SLD's true *destiny*.

On this there is a simple answer. The destiny of the Democrats is to be the old Liberal Party with a new suit of clothes. A fresh constitution, a cohort of ex-SDP ideologues and apparatchiks without any other home to go to — that is all that remains of the brave new social democratic world. A few months ago, the pre-split SDP were claiming 55,000 members. How many remain, after the Owen deviation and the general disillusion, is anybody's guess.

Here, indeed, there is an interesting aspect to this contest. A high proportion of those who will be taking part in it are, at the moment, not members of any party. This is because of a requirement that all SLD members have to join afresh. Since early March, only a rumoured 30,000 have done so — a figure so low that SLD headquarters has been too embarrassed to admit to it. In addition to ex-SDPers, there were an estimated 90,000 to 100,000 Liberals, making a potential total of around 150,000. Yet few imagine that as many as 60,000 will be members of the new organisation by the time of polling for the leader.

> *Far more than with the two main parties, the public image of the centre is bound up with the personality of its chief standard-bearer*

Who will the members be, where will they be located, and how will they break down in terms of class, occupation, gender, age, political opinion? Such questions are naturally of great interest to the candidates, who face election on a one-member-one-vote democratic franchise. Yet the answer to any of them is completely unknown. Beyond a hunch that the superior local organisation and deeper roots of the Liberals will ensure an overwhelming Liberal dominance in what is in many ways a traditional Liberal contest, there is nothing to go on.

It may, therefore, be premature to regard the outcome as a foregone conclusion. If Paddy Ashdown is the early favourite this may be in part because he has a memorable face and style, whereas many people have difficulty in remembering who Alan Beith is. Over the next two months, however, both will have ample opportunity to present themselves on television, and Beith is certainly not to be underestimated.

I first became aware of his capacities when we were colleagues together in the small, beleaguered (yet oddly fertile) politics department at Newcastle University. At the time, he seemed the least likely candidate for stardom. Mild, agreeable, wryly humorous, self-contained, apparently content with his pretty undemanding lot, his aspirations did not seem to extend beyond the local magistrates' bench and, perhaps, the regional secretaryship of the Royal Institute of Public Administration. He served as an independent local councillor, wrote and researched little, indulged his eccentric hobby as Liberal candidate in a hopeless seat, and taught the minimum number of hours he could get away with. But he did show early signs of political acumen. I remember being impressed when, on one occasion, we were all required to put on an extra optional course for the students. After careful thought Alan submitted as his offering "Comparative Bureaucracies" on the grounds, which proved accurate, that a course with such a boring title would have no takers.

"BORING" is a word that frequently attaches to Beith. Probably now, as then, he uses boringness as a tactic: to help him keep his head down and avoid disagreeable scrapes, while the prima donnas burn themselves out. He is certainly not boring in the Robert Maclennan sense of aggressive, even malevolent, dullness designed to rot the brain and numb the nerves. Perhaps Beith is only boring to the undiscerning — boring in the Baldwinian or Attleean sense of preferring mundane reality to flashy rhetorical flourishes.

Attlee, indeed, is a leader with whom, at this stage in his career, Beith might reasonably be compared. As with Attlee, his preference for a low profile and getting on with the job has fooled people into treating him as unimportant. Like Attlee he has combined a stunning ability to be in the right place at the right time with an uncanny knack of surviving by the skin of his teeth. As with Attlee, luck had a lot to do with it: his big break came with Lord Lambton's unexpected resignation in 1973 as MP for Berwick-on-Tweed, where Beith was Liberal candidate in situ. But it was skill more than luck that secured him three hairsbreadth victories in a row — November 1973, February and October 1974 — all with majorities under 200, before he managed, through continued hard work, to make his seat impregnable.

Dogged, reliable, consistent, intelligent, are descriptions that apply to Beith in parliament. To some Democrats, he is tarred with the David Steel brush, as a Liberal establishment figure, more interested in running the show from Westminster than listening to the grass roots. To others, he represents the old loyalties of Liberalism which give the party its historic meaning. Both seem a bit far-fetched. The reality is much more that he is a decent, conscientious, well-balanced man of cautious views and solid integrity, with a good track record. But he won't pull rabbits out of hats.

Will Ashdown? Certainly this is not a case of Tweedledum and Tweedledee: one candidate is everything the other is not. To gamble or consolidate, that is the question. The adventurous, the impatient, the impressionable, perhaps some of the more radical will vote for Ashdown. The battle-scarred, the experienced, and those, perhaps, who take the long view and reckon that the past succession of matinée idols in the Liberal driving seat has been a mixed blessing, will vote for Beith. Safety First? For Democrats who wish to stay in business, that may not be a bad motto at this stage in their evolution. □

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A toe in the water of revisionism

THOSE WHO want the hard detail of the Labour Party's new policies must relearn the First Commandment of the Puritan creed: deferred gratification. The most constantly reiterated chorus in the policy review's first-stage draft reports is that this or that "will be considered in depth" or will for the first time be discussed at all — only during the second year of the review process.

Another theme is repeated time and again: the coupling of individual wants and community needs. Labour is extending a nervous hand of friendship to the supposedly hegemonic ethos of consumerism and individualism, but keeping the other hand firmly behind its back, fingers crossed for the revival of communitarian spirit. The resultant bet-hedging becomes wearying. Maliciously, one imagines Neil Kinnock as a Japanese factory supervisor, leading the staff of Walworth Road in their pre-work exercises with campaigns director Peter Mandelson as cheerleader: We are individuals! (bend); We are consumers! (stretch); But we are also a community! (oomph! Straighten up: collapse of stout party in the second rank).

This is, of course, unfair. The general purposes of the policy review are quite obviously pointing in the right directions: away from Labour's internal squabbles towards the concerns of the electorate; away from worn shibboleths towards fresh thinking about basic issues; away from drawing up policies in a vacuum and towards integrating policy formation with scrutiny of popular opinion. It has left Bennite fundamentalists crying for the forgotten verities, abandoning most of what was once refreshing about Benn's own stress on the democratic imagination. This is one of the most miserable spectacles in contemporary politics: to see Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and others who once espoused a genuinely radical vision of the future turn, out of sheer dismay at seeing themselves outmaneouvred, from politicians into evangelists, from evangelists into resurrectionists.

Yet somehow the party seems to have found itself liberated from the old prison only to land on the horns of a false, self-imposed dilemma. On one side over-elaborated and electorally unsaleable commitments, on the other the delusive virtues of vagueness. So terrified are Labour's leaders of making promises that either can't be fulfilled or won't appeal, that they seem to think the fewer commitments the better. Vacuity, if not a political philosophy, is certainly espoused as a neo-political style. The "Britain in the World" draft, which says virtually nothing about anything — least of all (surprise, surprise!) about nuclear weapons — is the most extreme example of this vacuity. The "Democracy" draft runs it pretty close, and outstrips it in terms of sheer conceptual cloudiness.

This approach doesn't even accord well with what the best research on electoral behaviour tells us. Voters do form strong though not always accurate ideas on what parties promise. They won't put their crosses against a blank space on election day. They will also be influenced not just by what parties promise but by how they've performed beforehand. An opposition's performance — though obviously less prominent than a government's — will matter, at the despatch box or in local government. Thus it is depressing that only once in all seven review papers (in the "Consumers" draft) is the idea of "prefigurative form", showing in microcosm now what Labour plans to do on national level, given emphasis. Otherwise, it all sounds as though we sit here in limbo until the world starts again in 1991.

The most deeply depressing aspect of the results so far from Labour's travails, however, is not the cloudiness of some parts in the thinking, the conservatism of other parts, the lack of readiness to challenge assumptions about public opinion, the policy *lacunae* still unfilled. It is the failure to perceive ideas generated anywhere between Labour's ingrown family quarrels on the one hand, and an undifferentiated mass of "the public" (never more massified than when perceived as individual atoms, as Hegel pointed out long ago) on the other.

To echo the constant refrain sounded in the review documents themselves; maybe all this can be put right in the second round. We hope so: the *New Statesman* sincerely, even desperately, wants Labour to succeed.

Stephen Howe

Evasion in the search for euphemisms

SARAH BENTON ***reviews "Consumers and the Community" and "The Physical and Social Environment"***

LABOUR'S POLICY review shows the party's anxious wish to represent the future and at the same time defend its own past values against the calumnies of Thatcherism. Despite the frequent ritual references to the 1990s in these two documents, they are not a futuristic sketch. Both working parties look to a revived and reshaped state machine to represent the public good and counter the worst effects of the market. It is futuristic in that there is nothing to be done until Labour again forms a government. And backward looking for exactly the same reason. While both accept new economic trends, from part-time work to greater consumer affluence, neither identifies new *political* trends to remake socialism.

The weaker of the two is the report on "Consumers and the Community", chaired by MPs Jack Straw and David Blunkett. It is marred by evasive and defensive thinking. The writers have gazed into the mesmerising pond of Thatcherism, grabbed the silver fish of "choice" and "consumer" and made a dash for home ground. They could have found better foundations in their back yard of libertarian, or even GLC, socialism.

Consumer and community are new political categories for Labour, and trail no history of dogma or established policy. Perhaps that is why this is the one report which Tony Benn did not attack. Despite this freedom for fresh thinking, the report does not define either of its key terms. Or rather it lists our individual economic and political roles — taxpayer, producer, elector, etc — and states: "That complex of relationships between the individual and the society is the community."

In common usage, community can mean a shared neighbourhood, a shared need, a shared function, a shared social identity, such as sex, or age, race or religion. A community *differentiates one group of people from the rest of society. It is* precisely that difference which gives a community its being and creates the conflicts which can be dynamic or destructive. It is such varying "communities" which shift, disappear, regroup with the times, which have created most of the political changes of the last two decades, not least in the Labour Party.

Such communities provide the social political being of many individuals, their access to public life and thus to democracy. How do they fit into socialist thinking? Should rights be founded in such communities, as in gay, or black, or Scottish rights? Should democracy be built on them, as in new forums for areas, mothers or children for a say in social services? Are parents a community which

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"Opinion formers within society . . . must be encouraged to promote these positive values"

Roy Hattersley & Jo Richardson

"consumes" educational services, and if so, are Muslim parents a community with particular education rights — and do white parents have a right to reject schools with many black children in them? On all these issues the report is wholly, horribly, silent.

In fact, throughout the report, community appears to be used as a euphemism for society, or the public, or even the state. The euphemistic tone is so strong that nowhere does the report use the word "state" even where it is clearly implied and resolutely defended. In three successive paragraphs it refers to "a community basis", "democratic ownership" and "social ownership", all of which seem to mean state provision. It concedes to the market the role of "the delivery of many goods" but its main energy goes into an extensive critique of the limits and dangers of the unregulated free market. "This is why the community itself has to intervene" it argues. Perhaps this means a mass sit-in when Marks and Spencer want to close a store; perhaps it means intervention by Business in the Community (and it has nothing to say about this growing development in community action). It actually means the state but hopes we won't notice.

One consequence of this sloppy language is that no distinctions have been drawn between what is properly private — where "the community" has no right to intervene in someone's consuming passions — and what belongs to "civil society", between the state and the private, where the disagreements over public intervention are most sharp. Should the state intervene more in the food industry or pornography to protect consumers from their grosser appetites? And if not the state, are there other forms of community action which should be given powers of intervention?

"Our goal" says the report "is the creation of a new public enterprise culture." This means better management of public services, involving "new forms of user management". Here the report does respond to the most persistent criticisms of state services; their failure to be innovative, flexible, accountable and democractic. It is at its best when it can cite good practice in state provision from local authorities and other countries. But it evades questions of whether communities of consumers, as opposed to individuals, should have statutory rights of representation and even decision-making within public services. It does not look at what role the voluntary associations should play, though some of the more innovative thinking about the state/society relationship has come from them.

It proposes three criteria to assess future service provision: should it put the individual consumer at the centre, should it reconcile conflicts between individuals (though not competing communities) and should it safeguard the larger community? The report also specifies a series of rights for consumers and duties to be laid on public, private and professional bodies. The SLD has got this far. The Labour Party must go farther.

On "The Physical and Social Environment", the Labour Party is on less defensive ground. It has not been colonised by Thatcher, as we have seen in her minister Ridley's ripostes about freedom and choice last week. Thus to reclaim the future ("our main aim will be to provide people with the tools they need to build a better environment — an environment for the 21st century") Labour can define the need simply: proper planning. It proposes that the role of planning be "rehabilitated", but that the planning procedure be made more simple, open and democratic. This is to be achieved by change at the top rather than through according new rights to community groups. However, it does promise "to look at new ways in which people can become involved in the design of their environment".

It is studiously vague on the apocalyptic threats to human life. Its most damaging gap is on the responsibility of the industrialised countries for the famine and ecological disasters of the third world. It refers to nuclear waste but not nuclear power and says nothing about renewable energy sources. This may not be as important as Tony Benn believes, *if* the new mechanisms it proposes for democratic decisions, and for resolving conflict between local communities and strategic needs, could be implemented. In the long term — that 21st century future — socialism's hopes will be vested more in an innovative commitment to making democracy work than in deconstructing nuclear power. □

Labour's policy review groups

*All the papers we review here are drafts; they are being rewritten and shortened before going to Labour's National Executive next week. Textual criticisms are therefore premature but not, we hope, unfair. Two of them, marked *, are being rewritten completely; we have ignored "People at Work" and commented only in general terms on "Britain in the World"*

A Productive and Competitive Economy
Convenors Bryan Gould MP, John Evans MP

People at Work*
Convenors Michael Meacher MP, Eddie Haigh (TGWU)

Economic Equality
Convenors John Smith MP, Diana Jeuda (shop workers union)

Consumers and the Community
Convenors David Blunkett MP, Jack Straw MP

Physical and Social Environment
Convenors John Cunningham MP, Syd Tierney (shop workers union)

Democracy for the Individual and the Community
Convenors Roy Hattersley MP, Jo Richardson MP

Britain in the World*
Convenors Gerald Kaufman MP, Tony Clarke (postal workers union)

Perplexing piecemeal democracy

STEPHEN HOWE *reviews "Democracy for the Individual and the Community"*

THERE ARE two remarkable things about the "Democracy" review group's draft report. One is that it is by far the worst-written of the reports now before Labour's National Executive.

The other extraordinary aspect of the "Democracy" report is that it isn't really about democracy at all. It makes a general claim about the nature of power and freedom, and then suggests a range of specific reforms in the field of individual civil liberties. All this is of course valuable, and many of the reforms suggested are long overdue. Yet they form only a small part of what is needed to present a coherent Labour vision of democracy or a programme for the democratic reform of our political institutions — let alone our society at large.

In most versions of democratic theory, protections for individual rights as against the powers of the State — both negative liberties such as freedom from arbitrary arrest and positive rights such as equal access to legal redress of grievances — are important criteria for judging whether a system is democratic. But they are far from the only criteria, even for the libertarian individualists who most strongly emphasise personal autonomy. Democratic theory is about the answers a society gives to a whole series of questions. Who rules? Through what institutional arrangements do they rule — including such issues as the physical scale of decision-making units and the choice between participatory and representative forms of democracy? In pursuit of what values do they rule? What are the proper constraints or limitations on the exercise of rule: for instance, when should the wishes of a majority override the rights of minorities, and when should the latter be sacrosanct?

The draft report gives an extremely generalised (some would say rather vacuous) answer to the third question — an answer largely drawn from and in places reproducing verbatim the party's "Statement of Aims and Values" adopted earlier this year, and itself based on Roy Hattersley's book *Choose Freedom*. It suggests some specific new protections for minority rights, thus providing partial answers to the fourth question. On the first and second it is silent. Labour's notorious conservatism about institutional reform is perpetuated here. There is nothing on the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty, on the powers of the Lords or (with one marginal exception, see below) of the Monarchy. Nothing, predictably, on electoral reform. Nothing, despite a rhetorical gesture towards passing power "outwards and downwards", on devolution or on restoring or extending powers to local authorities. Nothing on increasing political representation for women or for minorities, though there are to be new legal safeguards for their rights. Not even the cold comfort of a verbal concession to the left's long-standing dream of extending directly partici-

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patory forms of decision-making. Nothing on the *political* means by which communitarian values might be augmented, though it is rather absurdly suggested that "opinion formers within society . . . must be encouraged to promote these positive ideas." For that matter, the whole argument between communitarian and individualist approaches, perhaps the most important in politics today, is blandly glossed over with facile references to "the individual in the community" as if coupling the terms resolved all dichotomies.

The particular proposals made by the group include a Freedom of Information Act, based on the principle that all information should be freely available unless it can be shown that specific items must be exempted on grounds of national security or individual rights to privacy. Section Two of the Official Secrets Act is to be reformed, so that it applies only to national security issues and provides for a public interest defence. There will be limitations on the scope of Royal Prerogative; the preferred approach being to "identify particular areas of government activity . . . justified by the Royal Prerogative, and exclude them or regulate them by statute." Why not work the other way around and specify what the Prerogative *can* legitimately cover, if indeed Labour is unprepared to grasp the nettle of abolishing this archaic and undemocractic constitutional device, in which the ghost of divine right walks abroad?

A Personal Files Act will supplement the Data Protection Act, which is itself to be strengthened. A new Ministry for Women will be created, with a broadening of the scope of obligations on central and local government to ensure equality for women and oppressed minorities in employment and other spheres, including a national contract compliance scheme. Present immigration and nationality laws will be replaced with a non-discriminatory Citizenship Act. There is to be a widening of the rights, both protective and participatory, of children and young people, and of those with disabilities. Repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act is promised, with new legislation illegalising discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

The idea that a Bill of Rights might be the best means of safeguarding many of the rights enshrined in this piecemeal list is raised, only to be dismissed with breathtakingly feeble arguments — or rather assertions. The central objection is said to be that this would be "by its nature concerned with negative rather than positive freedom" — as if the former were unimportant (which the whole of the rest of the draft controverts) or the two were necessarily incompatible. Even more peculiar are objections on the grounds that this would place protection of basic rights "at the mercy of judges" — as if the report had not itself elsewhere rightly noted the need to reform the judiciary's composition; and that this would tie British law to the European Human Rights Convention — as if this were self-evidently a bad thing, and as if the report, again, did not in the very next section recognise the value of access to the European Court.

The standard of argument against a Bill of Rights, sadly, seems to reflect the timidity and confusion of the document as a whole. Restoring and extending democracy should be Labour's most important and most popular programme of all. Hattersley's report simply will not do even as a beginning to that task.

Labour's economy: zestless coherence

PAUL HIRST ***reviews "A Productive and Competitive Economy" and "Economic Equality"***

BRYAN GOULD's report, "A Productive and Competitive Economy", is the more coherent and convincing of the two economic review documents (the third, "People at Work" has been withdrawn for complete rewriting). It recognises the crisis that is likely to face the British economy in the late 1990s and the insubstantial nature of the current "recovery". Oil output will taper off with a negative effect on both government revenues and the balance of payments. The effects of current underinvestment in manufacturing and of the failure to retrain the labour force will bite in an environment of stronger international competition and rapid technical change.

The document emphatically rejects a state-planned and directed industrial policy like the old "Alternative Economic Strategy". Government policy will have to work to enable firms to meet competition by being more enterprising, efficient and innovative. However, the document emphatically rejects the free-market policies of the current government. Unregulated markets in themselves do not guarantee satisfactory outcomes for industrial investment, product innovation, or the supply of appropriately skilled workers. The state must both create a favourable economic climate for increased rates of investment and encourage the shop floor developments which ensure that investments lead to satisfactory products. The aim is a "Medium Term Industrial Strategy" which stabilises the economy and sets objectives that can be pursued through market fluctuations.

"We must therefore identify and learn the lessons from our past and current failures, and understand that we can no longer muddle through, living only for today and making no provision for the future"

Bryan Gould & John Evans

The document envisages a mixed economy but puts on the agenda for further specification the issues of regulation of public utilities and social ownership. It envisages a new type of regulated but not state owned company, the "public interest company". Likewise public ownership and state ownership are seen to be two quite distinct things, with a variety of forms including workers' co-operatives being possible. It is presumably through public regulation and social ownership that the "mix" is to be restored in the mixed economy and managements are to be rendered accountable.

I agree with most of this, and yet I feel uneasy about the whole document. Why? Because it lacks the sense of energy and urgency we need to create on this whole issue. It is lucidly written but in a bland and almost reassuring tone. It will be an uphill struggle to convince voters living in the south of England who see and believe in prosperity, even if it is the "prosperity" of the credit-card-sustained, tax-cut-fuelled soft underbelly service economy that will roll over and die at the first harsh economic wind. Without a driving sense of urgency in presenting the evidence of manufacturing failure and the balance of trade crisis then policies centred on industrial strategy will make no sense to the public. It cannot be a matter of leaving urgency to an election, with campaign director Peter Mandelson and a couple of smart videos.

The party has been talking about the need for industrial regeneration since the early 1960s, the public has been told the British economy is in crisis for 30 years, and Mrs Thatcher has made her reputation by claiming to have ended the period of decline by decisive action. If she is to be seen to have failed we need both events and arguments to convince the electorate, and frighten them. But we also need a credible alternative leadership, one that people believe will try with all its might to turn the corner on economic failure *this* time. Leadership doesn't just mean individuals like Neil Kinnock, it means the party too. Labour must be seen as a party capable of orchestrating such an industrial strategy, working with the private sector and with the unions to change techniques and working practices. Without a genuine willingness to collaborate and compromise with business and other political and social groups necessary to sustain such a strategy over several years, it might as well be abandoned.

In advancing such an industrial policy Labour is making demands not only of the British economy, but also of its own governmental skills and its own capacity to act as the leader of society. Given that the party is currently unfit for such a task, it needs first to be convinced of the need to undertake it before it can renew itself to do so. Given the

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> We believe we can assert with confidence that the starting rate [of income tax] at the bottom should be less than 25 per cent, and that the highest rate should be higher than 40 per cent
>
> **John Smith & Diana Jeuda**

electorate does not see the reality of the crisis, it will take a colossal effort to convince them of its existence, and also that Labour can solve the problems. The advocacy of an industrial policy is not just one section of the policy jigsaw, it is the core component.

I stress leadership and the need for public conviction in such a strategy because the success of industrial renewal is a crucial political matter. Without such conviction the strategy will falter and policy will change under political pressure, whereas persistence is more important to success than any other aspect of industrial policy. Switching the balance of national income from consumption to investments depends on political commitment, and in particular a willingness to accept current sacrifices in the interests of longer-term goals, to forego immediate personal benefits for the public good. It runs counter to the Thatcherite ethos. Such a switch involves workers being willing to accept wages rises that are limited both to no more than the rise in the cost of living and to no more than increases in productivity. It also involves those workers as consumers accepting credit controls, and dearer private housing. It also involves enterprise management being confident to undertake investments on the assumption that the policy will persist. This will prove difficult with the risk-averse managements dominated by the stock market mentality that exists today in most major corporations.

Obviously raising the difficult issues of political will and the building of a policy consensus will not help such an industrial strategy to get adopted by Labour's National Executive or annual conference, but there is no point in winning there and losing elsewhere, where it matters. Labour has to shake itself out of its own internal obsessions and into recognising the massive task of social leadership that lies before it. Labour will not get back into power because it cares for the victims of Mrs Thatcher's economic experiment. Opinion poll concern about social "issues" does not translate into general election votes for Labour. Labour will not get back simply because the Tories are desperately unpopular. It may get back if those who share in prosperity now are convinced that an economic crisis of unprecedented severity is looming; they have to be scared and convinced that Labour stands a better chance of handling that crisis.

On the report on "Economic Equality" the best that can be said is that it has simply fluffed most of the issues. In June 1987 Labour's tax policy was in confusion and it had no idea how its policies would hit middle income earners. From this document one is none the wiser. Income tax bands are the matter of a single vague sentence: "We believe we can assert with confidence that the starting rate at the bottom should be less than 25 per cent, and that the highest rate should be higher than 40 per cent." You don't say! Of course, tax levels can only be set in the economic circumstances faced by the government of the day, but it will not do to leave tax policy to the "careful consideration" of a future Labour government. Tax levels are the meat and drink of Thatcherite politics, and it is the review group's job to say something sensible about the general framework of taxation policy.

In particular Labour cannot avoid arguing for higher taxes *now*, if it is to be believed later. Current tax levels are possible only because public spending is ruthlessly squeezed, capital assets are sold in privatisations to finance day-to-day spending and oil revenues are at their peak.

A Labour government in the 1990s will be compelled to increase public spending, if only to meet the necessary demands of public sector investment and to reverse the squeeze on welfare payments. Tory cheeseparing cannot continue. But with gradually declining oil revenues, an end to privatisation and continuing high unemployment, the government's revenues will be under pressure. How then can we afford to promise an income tax system with low starting rates at the bottom, which is very costly in revenue foregone, *and* with relatively flat rates at the top (no higher than the European average, as suggested in the review document)?

The sections on welfare consist merely of pious generalities about income support and the promise of detailed proposals to follow. One would think that by now politicians would have learnt not to set as "objectives" statements like "to banish want and poverty from Britain". This is pure cant; poverty and want existed in Britain at the height of 1960s affluence. It is offensive for Labour or any other party to make such a meaningless commitment to virtue, particularly when any shred of meaning the statement may have is taken away in the next sentence where it is conceded that the "objective" will take longer than a single parliament. Likewise to make an unspecified commitment to a national minimum wage in an economy with high unemployment, rising levels of part-time work, many marginal low-paid jobs and large regional variations in pay without giving the vaguest information about its content, enforcement and economic effects, seems absurd.

The generalities in this report can hardly begin to inform the detailed work to follow and have already made hostages to political fortune with grand and vague commitments. □

An imperial or European power?

MARY KALDOR *reviews "Britain and the World"*

NEIL KINNOCK cannot repudiate the non-nuclear defence policy without creating a destructive split in the party. But Labour cannot win an election if it appears to be ashamed of the policy — to keep it quiet, fudge it, or conceal it beneath Churchillian rhetoric about defending Britain. The only possible way out of this dilemma is to try to change public opinion and the image of the non-nuclear defence policy between now and the next general election. An uphill task, no doubt, and one that requires much planning and thought. But one that is made easier by the changing international situation, especially the INF Treaty between the superpowers and Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union.

Perhaps wisely, the Labour Party has postponed the full review of defence policy until next year and the process will, one hopes, provide a vehicle for substantial discussion and the airing of views. "Britain and the World" only contains four short paragraphs on defence. It retains the commitment to a non-nuclear policy — although one cannot help wondering about innocuous sentences like "a strategic arms reduction treaty will have an impact on the Trident programme" (if the superpowers *don't* sign a START treaty, would Britain's Trident missiles remain un-impacted upon?).

The rest of "Britain and the World" is mainly

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> Only through the community can we regulate the market to prevent abuse, ensure fair shares for everyone — regardless of their wealth or status — and provide the services upon which the whole of society depends for its well-being
>
> **David Blunkett & Jack Straw**

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Forgotten struggle for the Western Sahara

For fifteen years the exiled Sahrawi people have been fighting for independence and to return to their desert homeland.* LAURA CUMMING *reports from their refugee camps in Western Algeria

Sahrawi culture and traditions flourish in the refugee camps in Western Algeria

Laura Cumming

IN THE MIDDLE of an African desert, two soldiers are showing me weapons: European tanks, one stamped "ER II", another with "Made in South Africa" printed on the shock absorbers, a third, a Russian-made Eska fitted with a laser device; fragments of French Mirages and cluster bombs, multinational napalm shells, still tarred with the yellowing remains of their contents. This is some of the hardware the Polisario fighters of the Western Sahara have captured from the Moroccans, with whom they have been in conflict for 13 years. Another of Africa's forgotten wars.

The Western Sahara, home of the Sahrawi nation, was a Spanish colony until 1975, when Spain secretly transferred the administration of the country to Mauritania and Morocco, who both immediately invaded the area in defiance of UN Resolutions. Mauritania, bankrupt and exhausted, withdrew in 1979, but Morocco continues to occupy two thirds of the 106,000 square miles.

The struggle of the Polisario and SWAPO in Namibia have much in common. King Hassan of Morocco refuses to withdraw or to negotiate with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Despite repeated appeals and resolutions from the UN and the Organisation of African States, Hassan persists in a war of attrition which costs Morocco more than £1 million a day.

In an interview with *The Times* last July, Hassan said, "If a Moroccan says that the Western Sahara is not Moroccan, then I put him in prison to prevent him from being killed by his fellow Moroccans", ingenuously confirming fears about the treatment of his own subjects. Talks in Morocco this month between Perez de Cuellar, the UN Secretary-General, and Hassan showed little sign of affecting his resistance to direct negotiations with SADR President Mohamed Abdelaziz, (who was elected vice-president of the OAU in 1985, the year Morocco left the organisation).

I went to meet the Sahrawi in their refugee camps in the deserts of Western Algeria. In the late 1970s, thousands of Sahrawi fled Moroccan napalm attacks, escaping across the border into Algeria. Many were killed or died on the long march, others are still trapped in the Occupied Zone around which Hassan has built a 2500-kilometre fortified sand wall, attacked daily by the Polisario fighters, who de-mine and bombard the radar systems and phosphate mines on the other side. Napalm victims are still nursed in one of the four refugee camps.

It is impossible to tell how many Sahrawi have died in the war. Census figures in the Occupied Zone don't distinguish between the indigenous population and the Moroccans who have moved there. President Abdelaziz speaks of under a million Sahrawi, 175,000 of whom live in the camps. They are mainly women, almost alchemically transforming the barren earth, and rebuilding their nation in anticipation of victory and a return home.

Exiled nomads

The appearance of the camps is entirely unexpected. The SADR flag flies from each canvas tent, forming long lines of colour in the flat horizon. Goats and camels are tethered at the edge of the camps: beasts of burden now, but still the main source of food. Once nomads, now exiled, the Sahrawi have surmounted appalling conditions to form strong communities, nostalgically named after towns in the Western Sahara. The memory of the flowers and rivers of their country is preserved in rugs and paintings for children who have never seen their homeland, and the jewel-like interiors of the tents recall their Arab-African cultural history.

The women have built hospitals and schools with the help of international relief funds, and achieved a higher level of literacy than Britain can boast. I saw children learning in Arabic, Spanish, French and English; fighters receiving sophisticated medical treatment; a new water pump donated by Japan cranking into action; an animated trade union meeting; and resourceful journalists filing copy for the weekly *Sahrawi Libre*. Yet these people were still starving and subject to fatal epidemics in 1980.

Living with women in the tents, I heard the morning bells summon them to work, and watched them return at night, dressed in army fatigues, some teachers and doctors, others nurses and farm workers. The Women's Union was the first to be founded, in 1974. Its vice-president explained that in addition to the fight for independence, her organisation represents "that most precious thing, the right of the woman and mother". Gone are the arranged marriages and dowries of the Muslim tradition. Women form over a quarter of the National Union of Workers' secretariat, and half of the Popular Congress which elects the SADR government where there are three women ministers out of 27 (a rather higher ratio than in the House of Commons). Women are at the heart of the revolution; their own struggle for rights doesn't have to wait until the war is over, the two are indivisible.

Fatimetu Allali, a government minister, is head of the national boarding school for women. Like all the other children, hers went to kindergarten from the age of three months, and then to school, so that she was free to work. Having also had five months' maternity leave, she is puzzled by British arrangements, and surprised that I ask how Sahrawi women have made such progress. Referring to Spanish colonisation at the end of the nineteenth century, she asserts "we did not wear the veil then, and we do not wear it now. We taught in the Koranic schools, owned cattle and were the administrators. We had women in the 40 Assembly (pre-colonial democratic government). Women marched against the Spanish, sold their possessions to support the revolution against Morocco, and fought. Men respect us very much."

I interviewed three Sahrawi women who had been rescued from the Occupied Zone two nights

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before and reunited with their families after many years. They ran underground presses printing pamphlets and posters at considerable risk — necessity literally makes them mothers of invention. Women like Knatha Iad, who made flags for protest during last year's UN Technical Mission to the Zone, were rounded up and imprisoned, some without their babies. Iad subsequently died in jail and is regarded as a martyr. Amnesty International cannot calculate the number of such "disappearances", but these women bore testimony to the torture, kidnapping and imprisonment of Sahrawi in the Occupied Zone.

One of the Moroccan prisoners-of-war I met, Captain El Abdelrakim, says that Hassan would find the return of his 120,000-strong army to Morocco a potential threat to his throne. In 1983, Polisario tried to repatriate some Moroccan POWs through the Red Cross, but Hassan refused them admission, classifying them as deserters. Even though the Moroccan army is perhaps seven times larger than its opposition, morale is low. One Sahrawi military adviser commented, "If an elephant is about to crush an ant, the ant must be clever. It must crawl into the elephant's ear and drive it mad."

Non-aligned, the SADR once had the support of Libya, before Gadafy developed different relations in northwest Africa. Its sole backing now comes from Algeria, which not only supplies the land, money and military support, but tirelessly negotiates on the SADR's behalf. Although Algeria recognises a debt of gratitude to the Sahrawi who aided the Algerian resistance against French colonialism, it is also clearly in its interest to maintain this friendship, given the constantly shifting politics in the Maghreb region. Morocco's principal backers are France and the US, and Hassan's hospitality to Jonas Savimbi of South African-backed UNITA suggests a link with Pretoria.

The SADR appears to be non-aligned in another sense. I was impressed by a democracy, based on proportional representation, with centralised and equal distribution, full employment, social and political parity between the sexes, no recorded incidence of crime, a strong trade union movement organising labour for "popular campaigns". I naturally asked government officials what political ideology they espoused. They were happy to acknowledge wide reading in Marxism, but cited their own political thinkers, notably El Ouali, the student founder of the Polisario Front, emphasising that his speeches articulated their democratic ideals. Of the 70 countries who recognise the SADR diplomatically, most are African, but officials from Cuba, Nicaragua and Yugoslavia, for example, were visiting while I was there. These countries offer resources and educational opportunities, as Britain did once. However, it is via the trade union movement that the SADR finds support in Western Europe now, unsurprising in view of the Royal welcome accorded Hassan in Britain last summer, when he left so sure of his position that he sent word to the EEC of his intention to apply for membership only days later.

On 20 May, the Polisario celebrates the 15th anniversary of its struggle. Diplomats and journalists from all over the world will hear its pleas for support in the legitimate fight for independence. With the backing that Morocco enjoys, it is unlikely that the Polisario will win this war. As long as the SADR retains Algeria's support, it is unlikely to lose. Only international intervention can break the deadlock. Meanwhile, the casualties mount. □

UNITY

Turkish dilemma: Cyprus or Europe?

CHRISTOPHER PRICE *reports on how the division of Cyprus could be solved if Turkey joins the European Community*

Nicosia

SOLUTIONS TO the "Cyprus problem" abound depending on your point of view. For the US State Department in the 1950s, it consisted of partitioning the island between Greece and Turkey, something the Turkish army seemed to achieve in 1974. But those who have the interests of the Cypriots — Greek and Turkish — at heart know that a permanently divided Cyprus is another Northern Ireland in Europe. Today, the European context offers more hope of a "Cypriot" solution than at any time since the Macmillan government which, still obsessed with the Suez, imposed an unworkable constitution on the island in 1959. Cyprus is no longer a contorted issue of superpower strategy with nationalist overtones but one of Euro-politics.

> *The Turks know that there are two inexorable quid pro quos for progress on EC membership: the generals will have to refrain from suspending elections; and they will have to pull their troops out of Cyprus*

There are helpful straws in the wind. George Vassiliou, the new Cypriot President, is unencumbered by the politics of the past 30 years and was elected with enthusiastic support in equal measure from Washington, London and Moscow. At Davos in Switzerland, Andreas Papandreou and Turgut Ozal, the leaders of Greece and Turkey, recently put together an Eastern Mediterranean equivalent of the Anglo-Irish agreement. And Turkey wants to join the European Community.

No solution to Cyprus, however, is possible without the willing assent of both the elected government and the military establishment in Turkey. The latter controls the largest army in NATO and used it in 1974 to occupy 40 per cent of the island. According to the Turkish National Security Council, the European Community now offers their only chance of salvation. This decision has given rise to real hope that the partition of Cyprus will not persist as a permanent blemish on the political landscape.

It has now dawned on the powers in Turkey that integration with the West is their only option. They urgently need access to capital investment and technology transfer to develop their industry and services — particularly tourism. Blocked by fanatical ayatollahs in the East, a Palestine-Israeli war in the South and Russia in the North, they now see no alternative but to seek full membership of the European Community, not just for the closer economic ties that come with such a deal.

It will be a hard struggle. Irrespective of Greek and Cypriot objectives, Turkish membership remains an anathema to most EC member states. It is seen as trouble — importing more unemployment, fanaticism and language Babel into an already plagued institution. But the Turks have military clout and the Treaty of Rome conventions are clear: if you're European and democratic, you cannot be kept out indefinitely. Though there is a strong case against Turkey on both these grounds, there is little doubt that the Turkish application will now begin to make progress; and that with a little help from NATO, it will probably squeeze in eventually. The Turks, however, know that there are two inexorable *quid pro quos* for this progress; first the generals will have to refrain from their decennial habit of suspending elections and subverting democracy; and second they will have to pull their troops out of Cyprus and agree to a settlement. Ozal and many of his military masters have now accepted this Euro-logic.

Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish Cypriots and their self-appointed "President", has not. He prefers to remain the big fish that he is in his very small pool and will fight to maintain partition to the bitter end. He is stepping up the confrontation, demanding new stamps in visitors' passports, harassing his parliamentary opposition with litigation and conscripting Anatolian immigrants from the mainland to boost his electoral base. He only has a wafer-thin majority in parliament and knows the Turkish Cypriot people yearn for the greater contacts with the outside world that the EC could give them. If the Turks withdrew political and economic support, he probably could not survive.

There is still opposition among Greek Cypriots to a "European" solution, but it is weakening. AKEL, the Soviet inspired communist party which engineered Vassiliou's election, has a new General Secretary and will follow the new, soft, Gorbachev line towards the EC. Vassos Lysserides, the Speaker of the Parliament and leader of EDEK, the pro-Papandreou socialist party, makes a distinction between the old economic objective of a customs union and the new political one of full membership for Cyprus as well as Turkey. If Europe will serve Cyprus, he will support an application to join Europe. Were Vassiliou to propose an immediate Cypriot application for full EC membership alongside that of Turkey, all the political parties would support him.

The essential beauty for Cyprus of this European card — eventual EC membership for both Turkey and Cyprus — is that it kills a whole flock

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Politics beyond the parish pump

Unlikely alliances are forming in the countryside to counter the global power of agribusiness.* MAREK KOHN *reports on the forces at play in a typical English village

THE IDIOCY of the pheasant is as striking as its looks. It blunders through the fields like the most urban of ramblers; it dithers in the roads as if to ridicule the notion of a survival instinct. Its abundance in a countryside under environmental siege seems absurd.

In fact, the pheasant's ubiquity owes little to its fitness for Britain's ecosystems and much to the continuing strength of shooting as a rural institution. And in turn, the gormless gamebird acts as a vital brake on the process of modernising the landscape into prairie. In *This Land Is Our Land* (Paladin, 1987) Marion Shoard claims that it "has done more to safeguard what remains of the traditional British landscape than all of the voluntary conservation groups put together". You pass through game territory on the way from Norwich to Southrepps, in northeast Norfolk. It is Heritage Country: green, wooded, obscure and enticing. The hedges flourish — high hedges make the birds fly higher, and the further the game is off the ground, the better the shooters like it.

There are plenty of pheasants and partridges stumping the fields around Southrepps itself, but here the landscape has been shaped by the mercantile classes rather than the gentry. The highest purpose is money in the bank rather than birds in the bag. Situated in gently rolling countryside a couple of miles from the coast, the village is divided into two settlements, Upper Street and Lower Street. Between them is a cereal prairie, upon which Manor Farm's house and its daffodil-lined concrete drive sit like a pier. The area surrounding the village is dominated by the East Anglian Real Property Company which has been acquiring and farming the land hereabouts for forty years. Its holdings are efficient, the fields expansive and hedges vestigial. Tidy landscapes make tidy profits. The ultimate beneficiaries are mineworkers and British Coal staff: East Anglian belongs to Coal Industry Nominees, British Coal's pension fund. This makes the Southrepps area somewhat unusual. Despite the widespread impression that pension funds and other financial institutions are the new lords of the shires, the Northfield Commission, appointed to investigate the question, found that such bodies held only 1.2 per cent of British farmland in 1978. Marion Shoard estimates the proportion of rural land controlled by individuals at 80 per cent.

Southrepps is by no means an exceptional village, however. It has its own individual history and character, but it is not an extreme case of anything; not a celebrated jewel of England's rural heritage, nor a ghost town stranded in an agribusiness desert. It is interesting beyond its own specific identity precisely because it is, in many ways, a typical modern English village. Within it can be observed the key processes that have reshaped such settlements, such as gentrification and gerontofication. Similarly typical processes have altered the countryside around it: agriculture has become intensified, and the land has become prairified.

One aspect of the village has remained relatively constant over the past century or so: its population. The 1861 census recorded 816 inhabitants, living in 200 houses. In 1981, 687 people were living in 279 households, two-thirds of them owner-occupied. In other words, there are fewer children. Like so many villages, it is an attractive retirement spot, and a quarter of its residents are of pensionable age. The demand for homes is reflected by conversion work in progress by the church on a group of bullock sheds and cottages derelict since the war, and a row of new houses nearby whose gingerbread porches suggest a rather over-attentive approach to the vernacular idiom.

The Halifax Building Society's recent survey found property price rises in East Anglia to be far ahead of those in any other region. At almost 40 per cent a year, they dwarf London's better-publicised 23 per cent. Anglian Water's Control of Pollution Act returns for the two local sewage treatment works add supporting evidence of the pressure on the region from residential development. The nearby Northrepps plant was persistently exceeding its pollution limits through last year. One in ten samples from the Southrepps works' was over its less stringent limits, putting it on the brink of failure to comply with its statutory discharge consents. More and more works across the region — about forty per cent — are failing to comply.

The village's effluent is discharged into the stream that runs through it, which is a tributary of the River Ant, which in turn runs into the Broads. The Broads face serious pollution problems. Human waste (and washing powder) is in large part to blame. The phosphorus it contains combines with nitrogen from agricultural fertiliser that leaches out of the soil to make a nutrient soup in which algae thrive. The process is called eutrophication, and it results in a layer of algal bloom that crowds out other water plants, other flora and fauna being affected in turn. The general diversity of species is reduced. Control measures do not attempt to tackle agricultural nitrates. Apart from other considerations such as the power of the farming lobby, the algae themselves could take nitrogen from the air if their water-borne supply ran short. Phosphate control and other measures have resulted in dramatic improvements in the condition of some Broads, but others remain, as David Brewster of the Broads Authority puts it, "virtually lifeless".

> *The politics are brought out of the towns, but the alignments between traditional and new interest groups are a rural phenomenon. Notably absent from the play of forces is the Labour Party*

High subsidies and low labour requirements have encouragec

Dickies and donkeys

Southrepps has its own area of importance to wildlife. The Common became a valuable habitat because it was grazed by villagers' animals. Nowadays there is scarcely a farm beast to be seen in the area. Donkeys, known locally as "dickies", used to be an important part of the area's way of life. There is no "Dickie Fair" any more, and no dickies to stop the Common being invaded by scrub. The rabbits that might have compensated for the absent livestock are also in short supply, still vulnerable to myxomatosis. The site, which is considered to be of average scientific interest, would have to be managed in a fashion that simulates grazing if this "valley fen" habitat and its wide variety of plants (including orchids and rarities such as Grass of Parnassus and Bog Pimpernel) are to survive. Already rated by the

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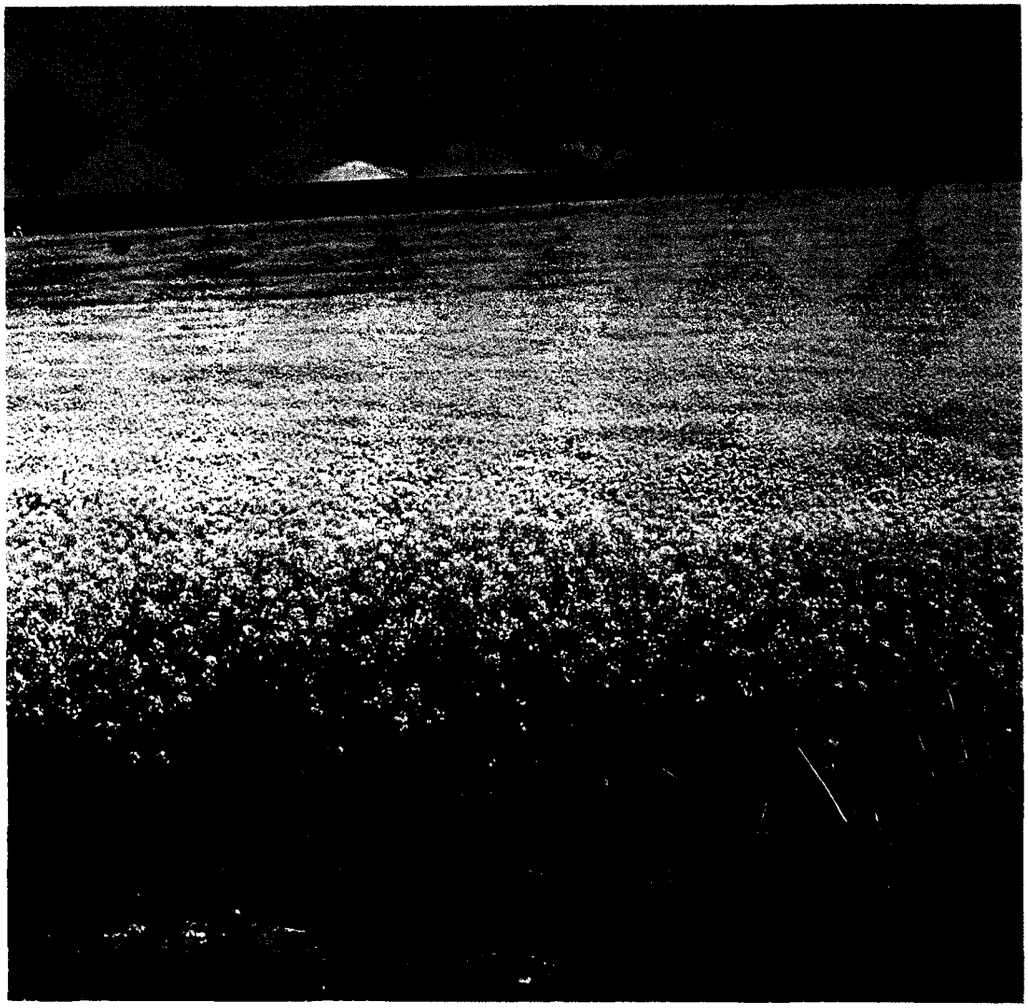

Rex Features

·mers to plough up and plant marginal meadowland: "efficiency" is now their god

Norfolk Naturalists' Trust as a "C" quality site, a grade below a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Common may be turned into a nature reserve. With about half of such habitats lost nationally to modern agriculture, little enclaves such as this, though modest, have gained significance.

The attention the Common has received has come from conservationists at county level, professionals in the Naturalists' Trust and the Council. Local people have also been active. Indeed, they once took to the lanes. In 1973, within days of East Anglian Real Property Company's acquisition of another 47 acres of local farmland, a bulldozer had destroyed an oak-lined hedgerow bordering the path known locally as Green Lane. A road which had fallen into disuse in the nineteenth century, it was important to local people as an amenity, and as a symbol of their dwindling "heritage". The parish council led the revolt, under the command of the then vice-chair, Mary Young. Villagers stood in the bulldozer's path to prevent it from flattening the hedge on the other side of the track. The company's general manager subsequently agreed to spare the remaining hedgerow.

In the comfortably chaotic front room of the seventeenth-century former pub in which she lives, Mary Young recalls the publicity the incident attracted. "What annoyed me very much was the BBC came in and wanted us all to hold placards," she says. Placards are not part of the paraphernalia of her own political tradition. She is a Conservative; and a Finchley Conservative at that, formerly active in the constituency party and a friend of Margaret Thatcher. "If I have really awful problems I write to her. She's a very good woman."

Mrs Young and her husband arrived twenty years ago. A more recent incomer is Tony Norton, the vicar, who has been in the parish a couple of years. He also arrived with a history of political involvement: he was a Labour councillor in St Paul's, Bristol. His current congregation is hardly more bound to the soil than his former one: he reckons that those who work in farming could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Economically, the village is an outstation of the town. Commuting is not merely for the middle-class urbanite with a comfortable car and an electrified rail link to London. On a more humble scale, Southrepps people go to work in North Walsham. Others work for the small businesses that are the descendants of traditional rural industries, such as haulage or carpentry.

Agrarian revolution

The Southrepps area was one of the first to witness the 20th century agrarian revolution. There was a low concentration of traditional landowners (though Southrepps has the late Lord Suffield to thank for a nearby railway station: he built it for the convenience of his friends King Edward VII and Lily Langtry, who used to come and stay). Commercial interests were untrammelled by the fancy of owners concerned about the views from their homes or the success of their shooting parties. The soil is of high quality, and will support a wide range of produce. As in much of the county, however, cereals and sugar beet are by far the most extensive crops. Both of these require particularly low amounts of labour. Subsidies for cereal production have encouraged farmers to plough up and plant marginal meadowland: 95 per cent of it has been lost nationally. Intensive agriculture, with frequent harvesting of crops, may remove humus and lead to soil erosion.

The land around Southrepps seems to have escaped serious erosion, as yet. One farmer (who wishes to remain anonymous) expresses many concerns about the future of his business, but is confident about the state of the soil. The pressures he faces come from his competitors. With a degree of retrenchment in the industry, large-scale agribusiness operators are at a considerable advantage over small producers with fewer reserves. Under 150 acres, you've got problems — particularly if you are servicing a debt, as this farmer is, on land bought a few years ago when prospects were bright and prices high. "I'm pretty convinced that a holding of this size will be almost non-existent within the next decade," he says.

The farmer's bookshelves confirm his enthusiasm for natural history. There is less of it to enjoy these days. "In the fifty years I've been about here," he says, "the agricultural policy has ruined the countryside beyond repair." He describes the removal of the hedgerows as "a great disaster". But he pulled up the ones on his farm. "When you start in business, you're borrowing money, efficiency's your god," he comments. He picks up a letter off his desk, from the consultants who are going to help him put the hedges back.

The pressure from conservative conservationists like Mary Young, and groups like Friends of the Earth whose appeal extends to those with left-wing or liberal sympathies, has helped to counter the grand processes at work in the countryside. These are largely people who have moved out from the cities and seek to preserve what it was that originally attracted them. The politics are brought out of the towns, but the alignments between traditional and new interest groups are a rural phenomenon. Notably absent from the play of forces is the Labour Party.

This is the more regrettable for the fact that the politics of the countryside take in national, international or global concerns. Today, the Southrepps environment is tremendously impoverished: no newts in the farmpond, few hedges in which small birds might nest, a few bedraggled violets where once there was a tumult of colour. There are little tokens of improvement. A few plastic-shielded saplings stand along the ridge on which once flourished half of the Green Lane hedgerow.

But these are not guarantees of the backswing of the pendulum. A few decades hence, for example, the Norfolk climate may have been altered by the global "greenhouse effect". Mick Kelly, of the University of East Anglia, sketches a hypothetical scenario in which Mediterranean temperatures and lower rainfall might attract the tourists, but harm agriculture — leading, perhaps, to increased use of agrochemicals, which would run into smaller volumes of water, as would the excreta of the sunseekers. And higher sea levels, caused by melting icecaps, could increase coastal erosion, making Southrepps even nearer the sea — which is nothing compared to what would happen to the lower-lying parts of the county. Parish-pump politics are becoming increasingly global. Urban-based citizens should not leave the defence of the environment to country dwellers and pheasants. □

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UNITY *Cont'd from p.15*

of difficult birds with a single stone. The removal of Turkish troops is a clear precondition of any real progress towards membership. That much has already been made clear. The three freedoms — the right to move, settle and set up business — have been the basis of the Greek Cypriot negotiating stance. All three would be safeguarded under the Treaty of Rome. Under the 1959 settlement the British, Turks and Greeks became joint constitutional guarantor powers. Sixteen years later British troops stood and watched in their bases while the Turks invaded leaving the 1959 settlement in tatters. The EC has already become both a civilising influence and as good a constitutional guarantor as is available in the world today. The Portuguese, Spanish and Greek colonels have refrained from upsetting democracy since their countries joined the club. The Turkish military would be in much the same position — unwilling to jeopardise newly-won economic privileges for the sake of another Cypriot adventure.

A European solution would also lay to rest modern British involvement with Cyprus which was poisoned in July 1954, when Henry Hopkinson, the Minister of State for the Colonies, in an effort to appease his Suez rebels, told the House of Commons that Cyprus could never expect to be fully independent. The British bases — two areas of 99 square miles, unpaid for and still technically residual parts of the Crown colony of Cyprus — remain to remind Cypriots of that statement and of NATO interest in the island as a military base and electronic spy station. It is doubtful whether the bases could survive the accession of Cyprus to the EC in their current form. Unless they are taken on a proper rental basis without colonial status, British troops might have to leave the Turkish ones when Cyprus joins the EC.

If the incorporation of the Eastern Mediterranean into Europe is now a serious runner, there remain a number of fences at which it could fall. The economic objections of the existing club members or the security ones of the CIA and MI6 could prove insurmountable; or the Cyprus government could falter and prove too weak for the task. Though George Vassiliou is in a strong diplomatic position abroad, he is potentially weak at home. He has taken into his ministerial team some proven and experienced devotees of a settlement, George Iacovou as Foreign Secretary, Michael Triantafyllides as Attorney General and Christoulos Veniamin as Interior Minister.

But he is having to govern without a party base among some of the most factious politicians in the world and has inherited from his predecessor a civil service politically packed with the island's mediocracy. (Intelligent Greek Cypriots, with one of the highest graduate ratios in the world, prefer the private to the public sector for jobs — as Vassiliou himself did until a few weeks ago.) He has to prove that he is not the pawn of AKEL, the Cyprus communist party which put him there, and whose presence was cited 34 years ago by a British minister as the one reason why Cyprus could never be allowed to be an independent country. But if Vassiliou succeeds in shifting the Cyprus negotiating table from Washington to Brussels and finding a European solution, as one Cypriot wit put it, AKEL will have performed for Cyprus the magic that Circe bestowed upon Odysseus's companions — turning swine in the Eastern Mediterranean back into human beings again. □

TROOPS OUT

A settlement without peace

This week Soviet troops began their withdrawal from Afghanistan.* SELIG S. HARRISON, *who has reported the country's affairs for nearly 40 years, examines the division in the resistance and the likelihood of continued civil war

THE REAGAN administration believes that the Afghan resistance fighters will quickly triumph in the civil war that will follow the Soviet withdrawal. But Pakistan, more realistically, realises that the paralysing divisions within the resistance will give the communist regime in Kabul the chance to hang on, even if only as an embattled city-state.

This was the thinking behind Pakistan's unsuccessful effort in the United Nations talks in Geneva to make the Soviet withdrawal conditional on the replacement of the communist regime with an interim coalition government. But the United States argued that negotiations on a coalition could drag on for months, or years, and that Moscow should be given no excuse for delaying its pull-out. United Nations mediator Diego Cordovez has long maintained that the climate for negotiations on a new government would improve once both superpowers were clearly committed to ending their role in the war.

> *'The rise of Islamic fundamentalism has introduced a more debilitating form of internecine strife in Afghan society: the conflict between heavily-armed fundamentalist factions and rival elements'*

Moscow says that it would welcome a "neutral" interim coalition government dominated by centrist Afghan leaders not identified with either the communists or the fundamentalists. However, the Soviet Union wants such an interim regime to include nominal communist participation and to treat the communist party as a legal party with the right to compete in future elections. Moscow could then say that it had not abandoned its Afghan clients even though it had given up its effort to ensure Communist dominance.

Until now, the Afghan communists and the Pakistan-based resistance alliance have had little incentive to compromise on the terms of a coalition regime. The communists know that they would have to surrender much of their power in order to attract non-communist participation. The resistance alliance is dominated by an Islamic fundamentalist clique that is content to see the fighting continue until it can install its own brand of fundamentalist regime in Kabul.

At the same time both the Afghan communists and the resistance have been seeking to keep their massive aid inputs coming in for as long as possible and did their best to undermine the UN negotiations. American aid, totalling £630 million in 1987, had been scheduled to reach £900 million this year until the conclusion of the Geneva accords.

Now, with the withdrawal agreement in place, both communist and non-communist Afghans are likely to do less posturing and more negotiating. While some fighting will continue under any scenario, the level of violence could subside if the superpowers seriously support the growing UN efforts to promote negotiations among Afghans on a new regime.

The widespread assumption that the communist regime will be easily toppled by the resistance is questionable. The Kabul regime may have an administrative presence in only 7,000 out of 26,000 Afghan villages, but more than 350,000 Afghans are on its Soviet subsidised payroll. Communist claims of 155,000 party members are meaningless, since many of these are job seekers who are likely to melt away in the uncertain atmosphere accompanying the Soviet departure. But the Afghan communist apparatus is strong. It has grown from 8,000 hard-core true believers in 1978, when the communists took power, to more than 40,000 today. Most of them occupy key positions in the armed forces, the para-military forces and the secret police.

If a coalition government is not established, the communist regime may well survive in the capital and a few other enclaves. It may face a rival government, challenging its legitimacy, based in Kandahar in the southeast or another resistance stronghold. However, it is more likely that contending resistance leaders will rule as local warlords, fighting their rivals as well as Kabul.

Initially, Afghanistan would revert to the civil war that led to the Soviet occupation. Over time, however, Afghan nationalism would dilute the communist character of the Kabul regime, and political realignments based on tribal and ethnic loyalties would bring an uneasy peace.

Balance of power

Afghan army, air force, and paramilitary forces total about 100,000. Estimates of organised resistance fighters in the field at any one time vary widely. Even at the height of the war, a surprisingly low figure was suggested by Colonel Rod Paschall, director of the US Army's Military History Institute, and a leading expert on counterinsurgency warfare with access to government intelligence information. In 1986, rebutting an analyst who suggested a two-to-one ratio of government forces

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Rex Features

Soviets leaving Afghanistan and the Afghans to their own devices

to guerillas, pointing to Afghan forces and the 115,000 Soviet troops then in the field, he wrote that "since only 20,000 guerillas are in active opposition at any one time, a better figure is ten-to-one". This figure apparently referred to the US funded and equipped units that have shuttled in and out of Pakistani base camps. In the same vein, a senior CIA operations official concerned with this programme referred to 30,000 "actives" in a 1983 conversation with me. In late February this year, CIA officials privately put the figure at 65,000.

Divided resistance

These figures do not take into account additional thousands of men in the loosely organised bands inside the country operating under local tribal leaders and field commanders. But it is important to distinguish between these locally-based fighters, who function intermittently often with primitive equipment, and the more disciplined, better-equipped units that have been based in Pakistan. To characterise Afghanistan as a "nation in arms", as some observers have done, blurs this distinction and ignores the fact that millions of Afghans have not been actively helping either side. As an analysis in the US *Armed Forces Journal* concluded, "if the Soviets can militarily or politically seal off the sanctuaries in Pakistan, the intensity and effectiveness of the guerilla activity will fall to a level of tolerable annoyance".

As it happens, under the UN withdrawal agreement Pakistan will end its role as a conduit for weapons aid to the resistance. But whether it will observe this pledge remains to be seen.

The resistance is weakened by tensions between the Pakistan-based exile factions and local field commanders inside the country. The ethnic and tribal divisions that have hindered the emergence of a coherent Afghan nationalism since the seventeenth century still exist. To complicate matters further, the relatively recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism has introduced a new and even more debilitating element of internecine strife into Afghan society: the conflict between heavily-armed fundamentalist factions and rival elements led by traditional Islamic dignitaries and tribal chieftains.

But the divisions do not end there. Of the seven exiled leaders that have been operating out of Pakistan, four espouse differing types of Islamic fundamentalist doctrine while three others are traditionalist Muslim divines with tribal alliances. The principal role of all seven has been to act as conduits for foreign aid to local commanders.

The fundamentalist leaders have received the lion's share of the £2.1 billion in American and other foreign weapons aid since 1980 but do not have a significant base inside the country except in the Pansjer Valley, Nangrahar, Herat and Kandahar. Inspired by the pan-Islamic Moslem Brotherhood, with its roots in Egypt, and by orthodox Wahabi groups in Saudi Arabia, the fundamentalists had a negligible organisation in Afghanistan before the communist takeover in 1978. They were arrayed against the monarchy; against the entire traditional Moslem clergy and various Sufi sects; and against both Western-oriented and communist modernisers alike. Above all, they had alienated the powerful tribal hierarchy by calling for the abolition of tribalism as incompatible with their conception of a centralised Islamic state.

Despite harsh repression, the fundamentalists survived as an underground movement until 1973, when most of them fled to Pakistan. There they forged an alliance with Pakistani groups and went on the payroll of Pakistani intelligence agencies. Helping Islamabad to harass the Mohammed Daud regime in Kabul, then at odds with Islamabad over disputed border areas, fundamentalist leaders led raids against Afghan police posts in 1975 and 1976. This link made them Pakistan's pet Afghan protégés when the communists took over in Kabul in 1978.

In seeking to gauge the strength of the fundamentalists, it is necessary to bear in mind that Afghan society is primarily tribal in character. In Iran, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's power has rested on solid Shiite institutional foundations. Shiism requires the faithful to pay substantial taxes to the mosques, which has enabled the Islamic Republican Party in Iran to build grassroots political machines. By contrast, Sunni Islam is more loosely organised, and in predominantly Sunni Afghanistan religious leaders have little or no institutional base though they enjoy widespread popular respect. Their status depends on a cooperative relationship with the tribal *maliks*.

A mid-1987 random sample poll of Afghan refugees in Pakistan showed that Pakistan-based resistance leaders of all factions have been discredited by persistent reports of drug trafficking and black-marketing in American aid weapons. Out of 2,287 refugees polled in 106 out of 249 camps in Pakistan, 71.65 per cent wanted former King Zahir Shah to lead a postwar Afghan government. Individual resistance leaders pooled one per cent or less. Now 73 and living in exile in Rome, the ex-king ruled for 40 years until ousted in a 1973 coup by his jealous cousin, Daud. For many, the former king symbolises a period of relative stability when Afghanistan enjoyed friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

But deeply rooted historical animosities dating back to the monarchy are directly affecting the current effort to find a viable formula for a postwar government. The fundamentalist leaders, remembering Zahir Shah's repression, bitterly oppose any role for him in organising or leading a new regime.

Pakistan has actively obstructed efforts by Zahir Shah's supporters to organise broad-based negotiations among Afghan factions that would pave the way for an interim government. Since the war started, the former monarch and his closest advisers have consistently been denied visas to visit the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. Instead, Pakistan has treated the seven-party resistance alliance as the sole voice of non-communist Afghans in negotiations on a new government.

Leading tribe divided by Raj

The roots of Pakistan's hostility go back to the early nineteenth century, when the original Afghan state created in 1747 by the Pushtun tribes under Ahmad Shah Durrani embraced the Pushtun areas of what is now northwest Pakistan. Then, as part of the "Great Game", the British Raj annexed 40,000 square miles of Afghan territory between the Indus River and the Khyber Pass. It was adding insult to injury when the British imposed the Durand Line in 1893, formalising their conquest, and then proceeded to hand over their ill-gotten territorial gains and half the Pushtun population to the new Pakistani government in 1947. By dividing the Pushtuns, the British bequeathed an issue that has preoccupied

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Pushtun-dominated Afghan regimes ever since and has poisoned the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

At various times, Zahir Shah's monarchy, Mohammed Daud's republic, and post-1978 communist governments in Kabul have all challenged Pakistan's right to rule over its Pushtun areas.

Pakistan's approach to the Afghan war has been dominated by its desire to prevent the emergence of a unified, armed Pushtun force on its territory. Thus, the Interservices Intelligence Directorate in Islamabad has channelled most US aid to non-Pushtun fundamentalist groups, pursuing a deliberately divisive policy designed to prevent the emergence of operational unity among the seven parties.

While the UN agreement provides for a 50-member monitoring force consisting of military officers from neutral nations equipped with 25 helicopters, it does not envisage a UN peacekeeping force similar to the one now operating in Lebanon. In a statement on 8 February announcing his readiness to conclude the UN agreement, Mikhail Gorbachev appeared to envisage a larger peacekeeping force with the power to intervene in clashes between contending Afghan factions. "Could hostilities flare up even more after Soviet troops leave?" he asked. "If necessary, consideration could be given at that stage to using the possibilities available to the United Nations and its Security Council." □

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FIRE IN MOSCOW

The democracy facing Gorbachev

An important debate about the nature of Soviet perestroika is taking place in these pages.* JOHN KEANE *enters the fray

HOW SHOULD we interpret recent events in the Soviet Union? One possible answer is provided in Anthony Barnett's stimulating book, *Soviet Freedom**, and in his more recent blast against the British left's churlish attitude to the Gorbachev reforms (*NS*, 6 May). He claims that a revolution from above led by Mikhail Gorbachev has begun in the Soviet Union. The official aim of this revolution is to modernise the economy by extending citizens' freedom: it is about guaranteeing legal and human rights, encouraging individual initiative and building economic and political democracy.

> *Gorbachev is presented as a man who believes what he says and what he does because the ruling socialist ideology places a high value on democracy. This understates the party's cold-sweated dread of social resistance of the Polish and American type*

Barnett argues that this democratic revolution may succeed simply because the conservatives within the *nomenklatura*, who are presently gathering around party number two Yegor Ligachev, have no viable alternative programme. And he emphasises that the new Russian revolution should be supported in the west because the world needs more democracy (the word which Barnett invokes constantly, but never defines).

In particular, the British left should put its shoulder to the Gorbachev wheel. Western left should join eastern left in the struggle for democratic socialism. Gorbachev's reforms are evidently destroying the canting neo-conservative image of the Soviet Union as one big dank prison. The trauma of Stalinism is behind us. The left should take heart. The Soviet Union is a revolutionary society, and it is destined to affect our lives.

Prompted by a three-week sojourn in Moscow and Leningrad, Barnett sometimes displays a boyish enthusiasm for the Gorbachev's speeches reported in the English-language editions of *Moscow News* and *Soviet Weekly*: "What is happening in the Soviet Union will have a decisive influence on the future of socialism. The momentous nature of the developments in Moscow can hardly be overestimated." I must admit to feeling deeply uncomfortable with this language. This is not because I am "embarrassed" by the Gorbachev reforms, or surprised by their deep politicising effects. It is rather because Anthony Barnett's arguments contain some gaping holes — which should be worrying for anybody who cares about democracy.

Cold-sweated dread

For a start, Barnett overstates the driving force of ethical considerations in the reforms. Mikhail Gorbachev is presented as a man who believes what he says, and who believes what he does because the ruling socialist ideology places a high value on democracy. This understates the role played by geopolitical factors in the domestic reforms (one irony is that the reforms were prompted in part by the Reagan rearmament programme). It also underestimates the Soviet party's cold-sweated dread of the outbreak of social resistance of the Polish — and Armenian — type. Barnett prefers instead to emphasise the links between Gorbachev's preference for "democracy" and the need for economic modernisation. The Soviet regime, which is presently experiencing a profound economic (and hence political) crisis, requires greater innovation and efficiency. These goals in turn require a weakening of "state absolutism". This judgement is compelling, and it forces Barnett to confront the key issue of civil society and the state — a much debated topic in central and eastern Europe since the crushing of the Prague Spring.

Barnett is right to say — here he agrees with Sally Laird (*NS*, 6 May) and Agnes Heller (*NS*, 13 May) — that in the Soviet bloc an independent civil society is not tolerated officially. The whole structure of institutional power, from factories and hospitals to youth clubs, newspapers, apartment blocks and graveyards, is supposed to be Communist Party organised. What is curious is that Barnett is blind to the implication that the official ideology — whether of the Brezhnev or Gorbachev variety — is also structured and corrupted by the leading role of the party in the state. He believes what the Gorbachev group says, since (as he remarks in *Soviet Freedom*) "the Soviets have so far avoided the corruption of public language now found in the West". Alexander Zinoviev and other critics of the ideological methods of *Homo sovieticus* are wrong. So also are those people (including me) who believe that a legally guaranteed, pluralist civil society independent of the state is a vital condition of preventing the corruption of public language.

* *Soviet Freedom* is published by Picador, £3.95.

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... in the Soviet bloc an independent civil society is not tolerated officially. The whole structure of institutional power, from factories and hospitals to youth clubs, newspapers, apartment blocks and graveyards, is supposed to be Communist Party organised

Barnett supposes that the party's language is unstained by power and interest, and that its often bland, grand phrases should therefore be taken at face value. This conviction — intensely irritating to anyone who knows the country or its satellites — produces some one-sided accounts of recent events in Moscow. The recent controversy over Stalinism in the pages of *Sovyetskaya Rossiya* and *Pravda* is a case in point. Barnett interprets this controversy as a great victory for the forces of honest-tongued democracy. But he tells us nothing about the ham-fisted methods presently used by *Pravda* to impose its new line on *perestroika*. Nor do we learn of the time-honoured party methods used by Gorbachev, Yakovlev and Politburo members to manipulate and secure this *Pravda* orthodoxy.

Anthony Barnett implies that Soviet democracy is the wanted child of Communist Party affairs. He fails to provide any evidence that the Gorbachev strategy aims to undo the principle of the leading role of the party. Of course, there are hints of this in the speech by Gorbachev in Prague: "No party retains the monopoly of truth." But Barnett surmises — without further argument — that the party is willing to saw off the very limb upon which it sits, that is, that it can voluntarily reform itself and relinquish its totalitarian grip in favour of a democratic civil society. And he claims, in *Soviet Freedom*, that this outcome is facilitated by the official hostility to the introduction of a competitive party system: "the absence of western-style parties might bring citizens closer to those who are taking the actual decision and could give people greater influence over their own lives, than in the major countries of the West."

Panic and rumour

Things are not so simple. Last week's important appeal, drafted by Dr Andrei Sakharov and others, to expose the party directly to the public opinions of non-party citizens reminds us in the west that since the crushing of the Prague Spring a new spectre has come to haunt Communists of the other half of Europe: that of citizens trying to create a mosaic of independent public spaces, without which democratisation under totalitarian conditions is impossible. It may be, as Agnes Heller points out, that *perestroika* will not be institutionalised, and that it will result in the restoration of neo-Stalinism or, as a current Russian pun has it, in the gun-play (*perestrelka*) of direct military rule. But it is also possible that the inch by inch advance of civil society is now an almost irreversible trend in the Soviet Union. There are precedents for this development. The attempted reforms of Alexander II started the painful birth and slow development of Russian civil society, and they culminated, more than half a century later, in the February Revolution and the overthrow of the autocracy. It could be that, amid all the panicked manoeuvrings, honest speech, rumour-mongering and double-talk in Moscow, the real significance of the Gorbachev reforms is that they will foster, unwillingly, the slow rebirth of an independent Soviet civil society, whose role will prove vital in diminishing the power of the privilegentsia and improving the everyday lives of millions of Soviet people.

We shall see. In the meantime, friends of democracy should not — as Anthony Barnett has done — put our trust in reform communism, Gorbachev style. We should eschew the choice between disabling pessimism and foolish optimism. We must try to read the speeches and articles not only of Gorbachev, Burlatsky, Yakovlev and other good comrades, but also the rich commentaries on *perestroika* by Sakharov, Grigoryants, Kagarlitsky, Havel, Michnik, Konrád and other writers presently living within the empire. And, as

... citizens' initiatives remind us of a basic political fact: no legally guaranteed civil society, no democracy; no democracy, no decent vegetables or meat in the shops, no freedom from fear, no freedom for Soviet citizens to travel to the western half of Europe

Sally Laird reminds us, we should not ignore the rich democratic potential — and the continuing police and administrative harassment — of citizens' initiatives in the Soviet Union. Most of the hundreds of independent publishers, fringe theatres, discussion circles, womens' groups, unofficial trade unions, rock groups and religious circles *predated* Gorbachev, and yet they have found that "the revolution" is not exactly a "magnificent affair". These citizens' initiatives remind us of a basic political fact: no legally guaranteed civil society, no democracy; no democracy, no decent vegetables or meat in the shops, no freedom from fear, no freedom for Soviet citizens to travel to the western half of Europe.

I'm not sure how many kopeks Mikhail Gorbachev would gives for democracy in this sense. But I do know that until civil freedoms are tolerated in his country I shan't be calling him a democrat. In the interests of liberty, equality and solidarity in Europe and the world, I shall instead wish him good luck — and continue to call publicly for more than *perestroika*. □

John Keane is Professor of Politics at the Polytechnic of Central London and the author of "Democracy and Civil Society" published this month by Verso (£8.95).

Apology

The picture we used last week of Georgi Markov was actually of the Russian writer *Georgy* Markov. Our apologies.

LABOUR POLICY REVIEW *Cont'd from p.13*

about international economic policy — aid, trade, debt, and the European Community. The only bits that can properly be described as foreign policy are a very welcome section on South Africa (I am sure it is right that South Africa should have a central place in Labour's foreign policy) and a paragraph about European political co-operation. All the same, the draft does have an internationalist thrust, calling for co-operation to reform the world's financial and trade systems so as to help the developing countries.

What is needed now is a political strategy for achieving this international co-operation, for ensuring that progressive forces hold sway in the councils of the world and of Europe. This is what is meant by a foreign policy. And central to any new foreign policy is the self definition of Britain. Are we to accept the Thatcherite definition of Britain as a former imperial power, part of an alliance of freeborn Anglo-Saxon peoples with a few west Europeans thrown in? Or are we to redefine ourselves as a medium-sized European country that can influence the European voice in world affairs and that has an historic responsibility towards some of the poorest people in the world?

If Labour is to elaborate and win support for the latter definition — and this is implicit in the draft — then it is very important to focus on the nature of European political co-operation. That is the key to policies on defence, the European Community, reform of the international economic system and world north-south issues. At present, European political co-operation is poised in two directions.

One is west European political co-operation, with a definite military dimension, largely within the framework of the West European Union (created in 1954 to contain the rearmament of West Germany). Such strengthening of the so-called European pillar of NATO would strengthen the Heseltine/Owen version of Europe.

The other direction is pan-European political co-operation, including eastern Europe and the neutral countries. This would involve disarmament measures aimed at reducing tensions, strengthening the democratic institutions of the European Community, co-operation between the EC and Comecon (mentioned in the draft), joint east-west efforts to resolve common European and global problems (especially environmental issues like acid rain or third world conflicts), and, above all, finding ways to support and to encourage a process of peaceful change towards democracy in eastern Europe, as may have been started by Gorbachev.

It is important to foster a sense of European identity, through a myriad of links with parties and groups at all levels, and through support and publicity for actions by sister parties which are also moving in a similar direction, as in Denmark.

In a sense, Labour's dilemma has always been a problem of credibility. The left insists on radical demands out of quite justifiable fears that the leadership will junk its policies when in power. The public, for its part, knows quite well that the Labour Party will not implement the radical demands of the left and is therefore unconvinced. Perhaps Mrs Thatcher's greatest strength is that she always seems to do exactly what she says she will do. What is needed at this point is a foreign policy that is consistent in theory and practice, that can be pursued in opposition as well as in power so as to calm the left's fear of betrayal and reassure the public of Labour's competence. □

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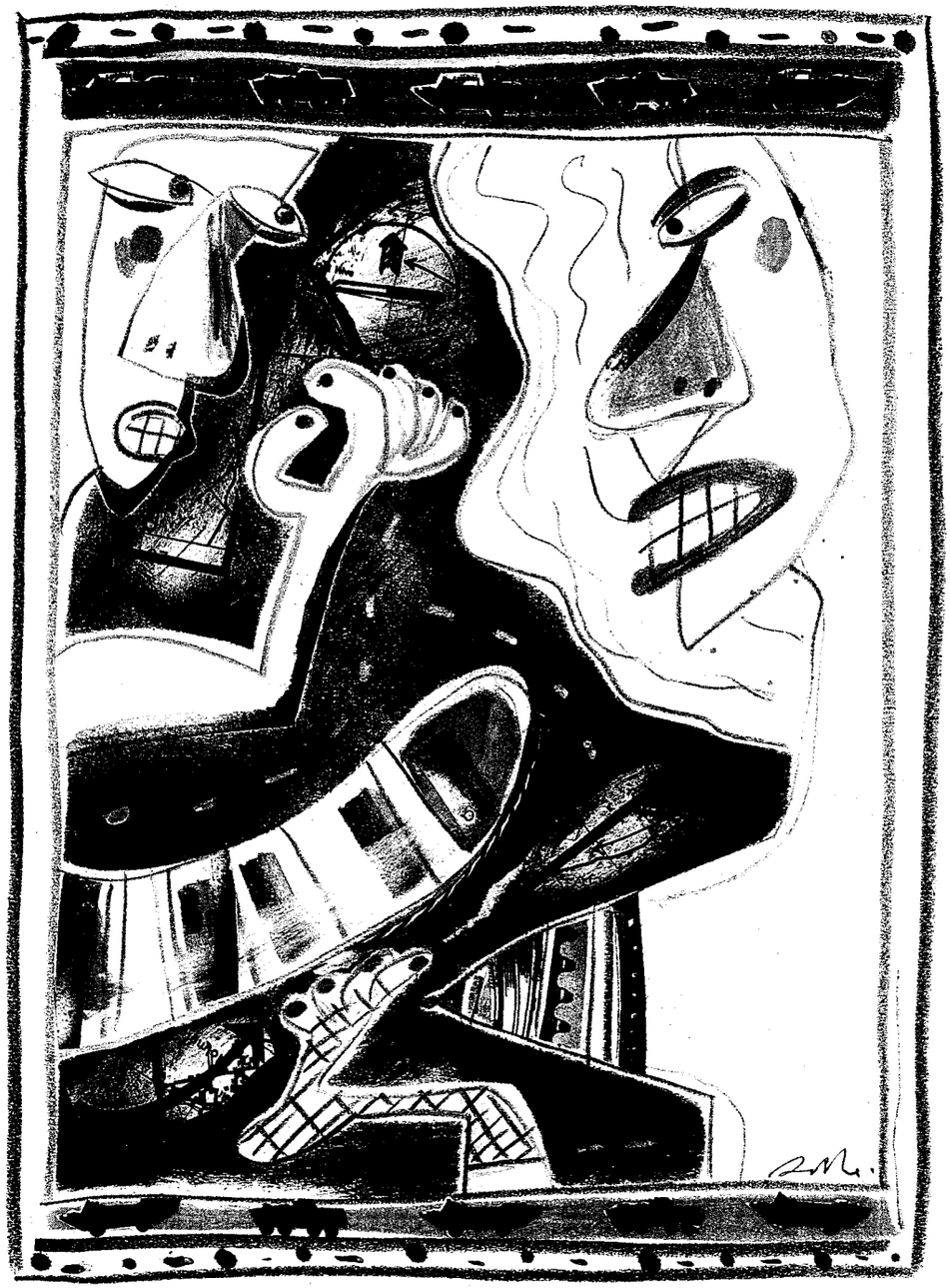

Christine Roche

Now thrive the armourers

For **ANDREA DWORKIN**, *women and men are irreconcilably embattled, and her latest collection of writings is suitably titled "Letters from a War Zone"*. **LORETTA LOACH** *admires the passion but questions the simplifications*

THE WAR ZONE from which these assorted speeches and articles come is, naturally, the place where men do battle against women. According to Andrea Dworkin, "The annihilation of a woman's personality, individuality, will, character is prerequisite to male sexuality."

Two simple concepts of power shape the rant and rhapsody of this prose: power as domination, always in the hands of men, and power as solidarity, women acting together to defeat or overwhelm the oppressor. It is this formulation presented as truth which makes her latest book so unrelenting.

The "battle of the sexes", as our Sunday newspapers still quaintly call it, is not for her so much about conflicting biologies as about conflicting social essences, straightforwardly constructed around gender. By expressing the problem in these terms, Dworkin neatly avoids the trap of one type of determinism while still holding on to another. Men and women are fixed and definite subjects unambiugously constituted through a relationship of malevolence: "One can know everything and still be unable to accept the fact that sex and murder are fused in the male consciousness." There's not much one can say to that assertion; it speaks of a world so hopelessly immersed in the malice and calamity of war.

Even the earnest chaps from the National Organisation for Changing Men are reprimanded for the brutality of their sex. Dworkin accuses them of hiding behind guilt: "You have time to feel guilty. We don't have the time for you to feel guilty. Your guilt is a form of acquiescence in what continues to occur. Your guilt keeps things the way they are." You can imagine the men in her audience, drifting away after such a speech, their pony tails hanging solemnly between their legs.

For Dworkin, there is nothing unstable about gender identities, no way in which Woman is made and remade by fragments of sexual difference. And, if we are to be the single agency of resistance, we can neither consent to our relationships with men or even display some of their characteristics.

The language of conflict in the book is a familiar one: men and women are drawn into territorial boundaries just in the way that classical marxism has drawn boundaries of class. Lenin emphasised the role of coercion as the basis of ruling-class domination; Dworkin emphasises it as the basis of men's. In this undialectical scheme of things there is good, bad and false consciousness. The bad are men; the good are women who agree with the author; the rest are those of us who have re-entered the "shadowy world of purposeful male confusion". These women "are being used by the male left to impugn our basic decency, condemn our loyalty to women, to shout us down, to slander and slur us; and because we too are women, we are expected to give in, our minds are expected to collapse under the impact of their antagonism".

This "antagonism" is the contesting political responses of other feminists whose arguments are totally absent from the book. Were a martian to read it, she or he could be forgiven for thinking that there was only one variety of feminism on earth and that Andrea Dworkin was god's representative of it. She has ignored an immense wealth of research and opinion — some in modified agreement with her, some not — but the fact that she will not or cannot engage with other theories of sexuality and representation greatly impoverishes her polemic.

According to the author, nearly every article in the book has been ignored, censored or edited beyond recognition. In most cases this is not without good reason: unlike in *Intercourse*, her accomplished discourse on penetration, there is

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little here to flatter or excite our intelligence. In the earlier book she was braver about probing the tensions and uncertainties of her argument; her style was more disciplined and engaging as a result. *Letters from a War Zone* has an alienating harshness, as if the spirit of the writer has been poisoned by the object of her discussion.

Raped and beaten herself, Dworkin has elsewhere successfully diverted her emotions, if not her pain, away from despondency towards the privilege and poverty of writing. In one of the more interesting pieces here, "A Woman Writer and Pornography", we can see the magic it holds for her: "Despite the sexual hysteria of our time, a woman writer's pleasure is not to be measured in orgasms but in writing." So the delights and dangers of a relationship might be found in the practice of writing and, just as lovers involve us in an "intense and punishing way", so too it seems does writing.

The ferocity of phallic imperialism has met its match in the anger and bitterness of this book. Read as history, however, it still tells an exciting story of a particular feminism — one which mobilised thousands of women to the marches and events that Dworkin addresses. "The Lie", the opening speech of the book, was given to a Take Back the Night rally in Times Square in 1979, where 5,000 women protested against the pimps and pushers of New York. A year earlier in San Francisco, the same number of women from all over the States shut down the equivalent of Soho for a night, and in Los Angeles 2,000 marchers were attacked and threatened by men in cars.

The whole of America was affected by these great waves of protest against sexual violence. Their volcanic voices, reflected in the tone of this book, propelled hundreds of women into situations of danger where laws were broken and risks were taken. Our chance for renewed and confident struggle diminished with the onset of the 1980s. Then the emphasis shifted from acts of violence to its representation and how this could be regulated by the state if necessary. Hence the famous Dworkin/MacKinnion ordinance which sought to outlaw pornography and which gets generous attention in the book. From here on, the matrix of conflicting feminisms emerged more fully. Rage, once a prerequisite for struggle in the 1970s, seemed to come and go. Reading *Letters from a War Zone,* I did feel nostalgic for the passion of those times. □

**"Letters from a War Zone" is published this week by Secker at £5.95.*

Tragedy without end

David Bergman

The Bhopal Syndrome
DAVID WEIR *Earthscan* £5.95

THE BHOPAL GAS DISASTER can be seen as one of those horrifying dramas that simply *happen* in exotic lands, where lives are cheap and tragedy a natural consequence of underdevelopment. Any book that attempts to reverse such a misconception, to search for an intelligent analysis of the disaster, should therefore be welcome.

The simplicity and brevity of David Weir's *The Bhopal Syndrome* do make it usefully accessible. For instance, instead of theorising for pages on the economic power of multinational corporations, the author merely notes that, in 1974, a decade before the Bhopal disaster, "Union Carbide was marketing its products in 125 countries, 75 of which had smaller economies than the corporation."

The book's analysis, however, remains unremarkable and incomplete.

Its central aim is to point out that, although the Bhopal disaster was unique with regard to the dimension of the devastation, the reasons for its occurrence were not. Precisely the same reasons are responsible for all those "mini-Bhopals" — the smaller industrial accidents which occur with disturbing frequency — and those even more numerous and deadly "slow-motion Bhopals": the "unseen and chronic poisoning from industrial pollution that causes irreversible pain, suffering and death" to hundreds of thousands of people in the Third World.

Although David Weir makes no specific exegisis of this "Bhopal Syndrome", he focuses on a whole "syndrome of problems" which make pesticide production in the Third World extremely hazardous.

These include inadequate knowledge of the health effects of intermediary products and the pesticides themselves, the scarcity of infrastructure in the Third World, lack of expertise in plant construction and the plants' location in populous areas. He presents the Syndrome within the environment of a continual demand for profit by multinationals, and the ambition of Third World government elites for investment in their countries.

So far, so good; but the book fails to emphasise a series of factors embodied in this Syndrome. The reader is left ignorant as to why *exactly* Third World elites encourage pesticide production by multinationals in their countries. Mention is made of the manner in which multinationals attempt to influence key decision makers to their advantage, but the explanation on its own is inadequate. A brief chapter on the dynamics behind governments' decisions would have been helpful.

Moreover, the book's analysis of the Bhopal disaster treads warily. It does highlight Union Carbide's awareness of the hazardous nature of the chemicals produced, and the fact that the plant was designed without "even one safe route for the gas to be neutralised at a very high temperature and pressure before it escaped into the atmosphere". It also notes that, in 1982, two years before the disaster, a three-member safety team from Union Carbide's headquarters reported that there was a "serious potential for sizeable releases of toxic chemical materials either due to equipment failure, operating problems, or maintenance problems". But other reports have gone further in apportioning responsibility.

Weir also fails to pay enough attention to the "slow motion Bhopal" — which is actually happening in Bhopal itself.

This is a particularly unfortunate omission since it unwittingly plays into Union Carbide's hands. One ploy Union Carbide has used to reduce its liability — a ploy in which the government of India seems to have colluded with it — is to deny the continuing health effects among the victims and their prospect of long-term genetic damage. Yet people are still dying and suffering in Bhopal, unmonitored by either national or international medical agencies and unnoticed by the local or national press. In a recent comprehensive study on the reproductive health of women, strong evidence was found that the leaked gas was "mutagenic and carcinogenic".

The book would also have benefited from more information on the ways in which a multinational company can prevent proof of its liability and the consequent payment of adequate compensation after a disaster. The actions of Union Carbide — including its attempt to arrive at a low settlement with the Indian government and efforts to prove that the state of health of the victims was not affected by the disaster — are a prime example of this.

The book correctly concludes that multinational companies and Third World government elites are jointly responsible for the Bhopal Syndrome, and Union Carbide and the Government of India specifically for the Bhopal disaster. It fails, however, to see how this conclusion makes the current court case in Bhopal so ironic, with the two "guilty" parties battling it out. As an Indian journalist recently wrote in reference to the Indian government: why "should one make common cause with one guilty party when it pretends to fight another?"

The transfer of the case from the United States to India was a step in the wrong direction. It set a precedent for allowing multinationals to be free of the standards of justice operating in their own country. However, a ruling of liability against Union Carbide may still act as sufficient incentive for multinationals manufacturing pesticides in Third World countries to concern themselves more with safety. □

Facts of life

Anthony Howell

Back to back dalmations do it
With their tails wrapped over each other:
Solicitous breeders hold them together,
Waiting for the glue to set.

The male is called a Sire,
And they take it very seriously:
Even more mysteriously
At school the masters are called "Sir".

Anthony Howell's novel "In the Company of Others" was published by Marion Boyars in 1986. He lectures at the Faculty of Art and Design in Cardiff.

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World turned upside down

Anne Smith

Gorbals Boy at Oxford
RALPH GLASSER *Chatto* £11.95

WHEN RALPH GLASSER worked with John Betjeman in the British Council, he told the poet that he had gone to Oxford from the Gorbals. Betjeman responded in "the habitual mandarin drawl, half eager, half blasé": "You *must* tell me how the place struck you — I suppose 'struck' is the word! Dear boy, did the architecture transform you?"

Glasser does not record his reply to this: perhaps it was unprintable, certainly the question was unanswerable except by this second volume of autobiography. The architecture of Oxford did not so much transform as confirm Glasser's Gorbals socialism: "the arrogant baroque and neo-gothic . . . proclaiming certainty, permitting no challenge . . . comfortable, complacent bourgeois streets . . . Wherever you went, power and tradition were inescapable." Not, for sure, the "blessedly illuminated world" his friend Bernard's father, an immigrant Jewish tailor dying of consumption and dreaming utopias, imagined it would be.

Oxford was a world where the social customs of the Gorbals were stood on their head. "Wherever you went, people called you sir . . . because they [these undergraduates] *expected* to be treated as important so indeed they were":

> Why, I wondered, should striplings of seventeen or eighteen receive such respect from men old enough to be their fathers, or even their grandfathers! There was something wrong in such a society.

With one's peer-group it was no less bewildering; the painful discovery that in that other world the polite niceties are "a necessary stage between formal acquaintance and friendship" and that it is "unwise, even dangerous, to confuse the two". To the Scottish working class, these niceties are an especially poisonous form of hypocrisy.

They extend to "intellectual" life too. Glasser attended a study group on social mobility conducted by Richard Crossman. Teaching Oxford students, Crossman was immaculately dressed; when he conducted socialist meetings outside the university he affected shabby flannels and a tweed jacket with leather elbow-patches which, Glasser comments, "he must have thought gave him a proletarian appearance". "Unbearably galled" by Crossman's "dilettante arrogance", Glasser replied curtly when Crossman asked "innocently", "Why do people work?": "Because they'd starve if they didn't!"

Crossman's response to this was first to patronise Glasser, then to snub him, and finally to seek revenge. What he did not do was respond to the intimations of reality in Glasser's answer and, Glasser argues: "Behind his unwillingness to do this lay moral laziness and hypocrisy." Harold Laski was little better. Glasser went to see him on graduation and, unaware of the Gorbals background, Laski offered him some social work in the East End, "to learn how the workers tick".

Glasser writes with enviable calm about the effect of such first encounters with the intellectual "heroes" of socialism on a person born and bred in the working class, who has had to earn his living by the sweat of his brow. He describes them as "affecting to see the poor as the salt of the earth" while really regarding them (and for "poor" read "workers") "as ideological concepts or as the raw material with which to make [their] way in politics". All three of his idols — Crossman, Laski, Victor Gollancz — had feet of this clay.

Glasser learned that "the questioning mind is not welcome anywhere". He learned too that in moving from the Gorbals to Oxford, from the working class to the middle class, "the spiritual losses would outweigh the gains". It is difficult to convey the agony of this to those who have not experienced it. Glasser's sensitive intelligence condemned him, as it has done so many of us, to exist in a limbo, with heart and soul in the working class, while belonging by intellectual training to the middle class.

Gorbals Boy at Oxford is as riveting to read as *Growing up in the Gorbals*. Whatever Glasser relates — from his love-affair with a rich Zionist fellow-student to attempts to recruit him into the Secret Service — he tells with a fine and subtle sensibility, not unlike that of another Gorbals boy, Edwin Muir. I shall wait impatiently for the next instalment. □

No such thing as a free slave

Catherine Hall

The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848
ROBIN BLACKBURN *Verso* £27.95

IN MRS CRAIK'S immensely popular mid-19th-century novel *John Halifax Gentleman* a holiday is declared to celebrate the emancipation of the slaves:

> Many many remember that day; what a soft, gray, summer morning it was; and how it broke out into brightness; how everywhere bells were ringing, club fraternities walking with bands and banners, school-children having feasts and work-people holidays; how, in town and country, there was spread abroad a general sense of benevolent rejoicing — because honest old England had lifted up her generous voice, nay, had paid down cheerfully her twenty millions, and in all her colonies the negro was free.

Such a rosy representation of "honest old England's" role in the abolition of slavery remained for many generations not only the commonsense of the nation but the historical orthodoxy. It was the Trinidadian historians C.L.R. James and Eric Williams who were to challenge that orthodoxy and insist that emancipation could only be understood in terms of the complex dynamic of capitalist development. James, in his brilliant narrative of the Haitian revolution, *The Black Jacobins*, argued that Blacks played a crucial role in their own emancipation and that the interplay of race and class was central to an understanding of Caribbean politics. Williams undermined the honest old English view of generous philanthropists with Saint William Wilberforce at their helm bringing in freedom to the slaves, by demonstrating that for important sections of the emergent bourgeoisie slavery was economically redundant and that emancipation was fuelled by the new demands of industrial capitalism.

Robin Blackburn's ambitious and impressive book builds on this pioneer work. His central concern is to explore the relation between the struggles over empires and the struggles over slavery between 1776 and 1848. Moving beyond the usual ethnocentric concerns, his narrative extends from the struggle for independence in North America to the contestations over the Spanish and Portuguese empires as well as to the challenge to the British and the French in the Caribbean. He traces out the processes whereby in the United States and Brazil colonialism was abolished but slavery flourished, in Haiti and Spanish America colonialism was defeated and slavery abolished, while in the British and French West Indies slavery was suppressed but colonialism survived.

Shortly after the foundation of Haiti as an independant nation, Dessalines, the successor to the Black liberator Toussaint L'Ouverture, ordered a massacre of some of the remaining French. When it was reported to him that some of his colleagues thought that this would jeopardise relations with the other white powers Dessalines observed:

> Such a person does not know the whites. Hang a white man below one of the pans in the scales of the customs house and put a sack of coffee in the other pan; the other whites will buy the coffee without paying attention to the body of their fellow white.

Dessalines' cynical conclusions on the primacy of economic interests amongst whites would not do as an overall analysis of why slavery was abolished in some areas and flourished in others. Blackburn modifies the Williams thesis on the relation between capitalism and slavery in important ways. Capitalist advance did promote anti-slavery, he argues, but only indirectly through the class struggles it engendered. Capitalism needed a regime of unfree labour but also unleashed forces which helped to challenge slavery. When slavery was overthrown, he suggests, it was because it had become politically untenable. In the turbulent decades between the 1770s and the 1840s: "As regimes, governments and states were made and unmade so anti-slavery forces, including the slaves themselves, gained the opportunity to isolate and defeat the slaveholders." Thus the defeat of the slaveholders in Haiti was directly related to the revolutionary crisis in France and the contradictions which it revealed in colonial policy, while the collapse of slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe was connected to the revolution in France of 1848 and the hopes which it inspired amongst the slaves.

Blackburn insists on the importance not only of the revolts of the slaves themselves as crucial to the successful struggles for emancipation, but also on the significance of anti-slavery as a popular force capable of being articulated both to left and right and across classes. Indeed at the points at which it

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was only aligned to radicalism in Britain it had little chance of success. The moments at which anti-slavery reached its most extensive popular mobilisation were those moments at which it managed to capture and extend traditional notions of English liberty and link freedom and patriotism to the defeat of slavery. At that point the British government could strengthen its legitimacy and maximise its public support by the grand gesture of freeing the slaves, at least in the West Indies.

Much is made in this book of the popular contestations of slavery. A lot less is said of the popular force of racism, except among the slaveholders. At points this gets close to an idealisation of popular culture as necessarily progressive, as in the few pages which attempt to establish a commitment to freedom and hostility to slavery within pre-industrial popular culture. To demonstrate that such beliefs extended to Blacks would need research which has not yet been done. Meanwhile, the prevalence of working-class racism in our own culture should alert us to the dangers of ignoring that which is politically undesirable.

Unfortunately, Blackburn's welcome emphasis on the central importance of the political and its complex relation to the economic pushes him towards a rather limited interest in the ideological and cultural. He rather grudgingly admits the contribution of religion to the anti-slavery cause and the key part it played in the British West Indies, in particular by the Baptist missionaries, in encouraging Black independence. But religion for him is something which has to respond to political and economic changes, rather than itself discursively constructing those changes. It is hard to overestimate, for example, the symbolic significance of the representation of the kneeling slave asking, "Am I not a man and a brother? Am I not a woman and a sister?" This image, produced on dishes, vases, medals, brooches, in pamphlets and in paintings, spoke directly to the Christian heart. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," St Paul had written in a text which was taken as central to the evangelical revival of the late 18th century. For Christians, that message extended to their slave brethren and the construction of the slave as kin provides the ideological key to the abolition movement.

Blackburn rightly stresses the absence of any single master contradiction in his narrative and the uneven and complex nature of race and class antagonisms. Unfortunately that other central social contradiction, gender, scarcely appears. The new bourgeois social order which he is concerned to delineate, whether in the United States, Britain or France, had a particular organisation of relations between the sexes as well as between the races and the classes. His analysis would have inevitably been more complex, more uneven and more contradictory if he had recognised the central place of gender in that social order. It would also have been richer. It is not enough to denounce the abolitionists for idealising the family, as if "the family" had a clear and given meaning rather than itself being a term which was fiercely contested in this period. Furthermore, anti-slavery itself, properly understood, was a site of struggle between the sexes over proper and respective spheres. These are not side issues to the more important political questions about race and class. Surely by now the left should have learnt that lesson. □

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Anger and the singular woman

Jane Dibblin

To Eat or Not to Eat
KAREN MARGOLIS *Camden* £4.95

"I DO NOT BELIEVE in anorexia nervosa," writes Karen Margolis. "The cures for breaking out of this inexorable round of starvation and remission are many and varied. In my experience, most will fail because they treat the phenomenon, not the individual."

Margolis "went on hunger strike" in part to assert herself as an individual and as a protest against the "normal" world she found intolerable. But despite the thrill to which she admits of seeing herself centre stage and outwitting the doctors, her condition engendered the opposite reaction. Doctors could give her a label, lump her with other anorexics and, as with alcoholics and drug addicts, pronounce on their curious group habits and traits. The label became another obstacle to change.

I once went with a friend to an alcohol counselling centre. Its treatment was startlingly similar to Margolis' description of her experience. In front of my friend, they told me: "Alcoholics are liars and cheats. They should never be believed." To her, smiling: "Isn't that right dear?"

The popular theses — that anorexia is "normal" dieting gone mad and that it is a "normal" obsession with beauty and model-like proportions which has been taken to an irrational extreme — do not figure in Margolis' analysis. Her obsession was not with beauty but with anger — and how to shut it in. Out of her mouth could spring angry words, so the mouth had to be punished. It would be strictly controlled: only black coffee and cigarettes would be allowed in. Margolis' plea for the individual to be treated according to her particular experience should be written large on the wall of everyone working with women who refuse to eat, who eat and throw up or who are dependent on alcohol, drugs, tranquilisers.

In making her central point, however, Margolis, a feminist, strangely omits to engage with books by other feminists which explore why so many women have a neurotic relationship with food. Suzie Orbach's *Fat is a Feminist Issue* broke new ground when it was first published. It has since been overtaken by discussion in the women's movement and is often seen now as over-behaviourist, concentrating on bringing eating under control and ignoring the root causes of obsessive eating patterns. But it kicked off an analysis of women's relationship to food and body shape, which was taken further by Kim Chernin in *Womansize* and *The Hungry Self*.

In her search for identity and selfhood and her efforts to shrug off a confining label, Margolis also appears to reject other more complex and illuminating patterns. But exploration of one need not involve denial of others: the minute detail of the individual is a thread in the web of the social. The tension between the two is critical.

To Eat or Not To Eat is a curious book: honest in huge cutting swathes; yet vital pieces of the jigsaw are missing. We are never really shown the key which unlocked her prison cell. □

The rubbish strikes back

Josephine Saxton

Bulldozer Rising
ANNA LIVIA *Onlywomen* £3.95

ONLY OCCASIONALLY do I read something which is deeply shocking. I do not mean horrifying or disgusting; I mean shocking. And even when such tremors to the atrophying soul are unpleasant, they are always refreshing and therefore welcome.

By these lights, the effect of *Bulldozer Rising* is completely invigorating. Under the deadening and depressing effect of the backlash against feminism (it is no longer the done thing even to use the word) I had forgotten how to hate, loathe and detest male domination, those who effect it and the society which condones its vicious repression. I had especially forgotten, until Anna Livia woke me up, how it is possible to be witty, original and very clever in hating: I had begun to subscribe to the wet notion that violence, even in words, cannot be right under any circumstances. It must be my age.

Having determined not to end up bitter, I had overlooked other paths; I'd not even countenanced the possibility of simply killing off the enemy by high-speed, high-kicking roller-skating, one down and millions to go. I suppose this amounts to terrorism — I *said* the book was shocking; perhaps it ought to be banned for incitement, not to mention for its lesbian theme. But there is more, and worse.

In this exemplary, brilliantly written satire, somewhat in the mode of *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451*, we are shown how our society (for indeed it is ours) is not much kinder to older females than were the Eskimos. Who among us, menopausal, has not heard that word used as an insult, or sensed the injunction "on yer sledge" as a sinister undertone to "Madam"? Here we have depicted, in glittering close-up, a caste system more horrible than we usually care to think about — until we see that it is, in effect, the one we inhabit now.

The rubbish on the streets leans as if for comfort, and some of it is old people in disguise. These cross the street at their peril, for everyone else is speedy, athletic, uncaring. And this subversive group — those who have evaded the law of death at age 40 — care for each other, plot, hope, dedicated to change for the better. The novel not only has energetic hatred, it has enormous compassion, and appeals to what is left in us that might prevent our decaying world from sinking into inescapable oligarchy. Patriarchs, doctors, whizz-kids: these are the upper echelons in Livia's vivid city — and what talent she has for turning the present into some other time. As is required by all dystopia stories, her touch is deft enough to chill, not deluge.

Woven into the story of heroics, subversiveness and hope-against-all-odds is a love story. Most writers need the dimensions of a blockbuster to say as much as Livia does in 188 pages. But then too much of this would not only shock but repel, for she can also horrify and disgust, and is expert at vile detail, at hitting the reader in the face with blood, vomit and guts.

This novel deliberately ignores a balanced view of male domination. "Shit," it says, "to the reasonable approach; it doesn't work." If you are lulled by present trends, you will recoil from *Bulldozer Rising*, muttering about bull dykes, ballbreakers and other insults arising from an (understandable) fear. But the events that Livia has presented are only a gnat's willy away from the reality we know — and even most men would hardly desire such a future. □

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SF/FANTASY

Keeping up with the cyberpunks

Colin Greenland

BURNING CHROME (Grafton, £2.95), a collection of William Gibson's smart short stories, carries a preface by Bruce Sterling that is actually one of his many manifestos for "the emergent new school of Eighties SF" commonly known as cyberpunk. Sterling praises the futurism of Gibson's vision of an expansive, impacted, urban culture, violently unequal: a culture in which technique has outstripped understanding; *can* has subordinated *will*. Though Sterling's rhetoric maintains, conventionally but unfashionably, that science fiction must be extrapolative and logical, Gibson says: "I don't extrapolate; I just look around."

The wave of cyberpunk broke a few years ago in America. Britain is now in the midst of it. Michael Swanwick's **Vacuum Flowers** (Simon & Schuster, £10.95) displays the glittering manner with none of Sterling's determined progressive ideology. Its heroine is composite: the recorded psyche of Rebel Elizabeth Mudlark, native of an artificial space habitat, walking around in the body of Eucrasia Walsh, a highly skilled wetware programmer. Wetware is software for human beings: electromagnetic analogues of sensation, skills and states of mind that can be shopped for in glossy boutiques or scuzzy backstreet clinics.

Vacuum Flowers is snazzy, and not a little facetious. Rebel Eucrasia Mudlark is intelligently characterised, though rather passive considering it's supposed to be her story. Even with two personalities, she's outnumbered by her boyfriend Wyeth, who has four, all designer models; but since they're three kinds of dominant male and a little boy clown, his novelty is rather less than the sum of his parts. He's not even scary, as Gibson's customised psychopaths generally are. The virtues of *Vacuum Flowers* are found elsewhere in its prolific throwaway detail: the holographic briefcases; the orbital slums.

It may be surprising that a radical technology of instant self-improvement has not had more revolutionary results, or can even be purely reactionary. In opposition to burgeoning capitalism, see Swanwick construct a whole series of societies resembling American fears of communism: a sacrifice of personality to some supreme myth.

Much more considered and better built, Walter Jon Williams' rebel romance **Hardwired** (Futura, £3.50) casts a battered America in resistance against omnivorous corporations in satellite cities. Compared to *Vacuum Flowers, Hardwired* is deeply serious: not about the future, but about the heroic heart. The heroic heart, we learn, beats just as fiercely, though the brain be mostly silicon.

Cowboy (his other aliases are Randolph Scott and Gary Cooper) is a cyborg courier running contraband across a Balkanised USA. Sarah, a supercharged drug-dealer and sexual assassin, is just as big and strong as Cowboy, but has a sick brother and fewer principles. Their struggle towards love and idealism is an encounter of two vulnerable creatures encased in expensively lethal armour. Williams, like Gibson, draws for his ethos on the sullen romanticism of '50s *noir*. Only a dreary sexist subtext qualified my pleasure.

Two recent sf comedies show affinities with the imagery and issues of cyberpunk and with its heavy reliance on older forms of popular fiction. In **Dad's Nuke** (Grafton, £2.95) Marc Laidlaw freewheels with the glee of the totally terrified around his central notion of militant suburbia. When Jock Smith throws a barbecue to show off his backyard ground-to-air missile launcher ("solid investments in affordable defensive technology"), what can his neighbour and deadly rival Dad Johnson do but up the ante with a garage-based nuclear reactor? Waste won't be a problem once the new model Johnson baby is delivered from the hospital incubaker. ("Nine months is too long to trust something as complex as a baby to your body.") Baby Erica eats nuclear waste.

Despite his concern about the dangers of "community security", invasion technology, aggressive evangelism and media narcissism, Laidlaw's satire is intense rather than urgent. In fact, it's almost quaint. *Locus*, the science fiction business journal, compared *Dad's Nuke* to Robert Sheckley and Jules Feiffer, and with some justice. Laidlaw's sweet-and-sour burlesque is very like American humorous writing of the late '50s: anxious, wry, preposterous and informed by a Freudian interpretation of bourgeois repressions and possessions. It's also very funny.

Jack Womack's **Ambient** (Unwin Hyman, £10.95) makes a comparable travesty of New York, a citadel of acid graffiti and festering garbage, but Womack's manner is more visceral and less thoughtful than Laidlaw's; more sour, less sweet. Ambients are the irradiated mutants and sympathetically self-mutilated outcasts of a fuck-you society; punk gargoyles of a cancered state. Here everything is bloated and grotesque, including the jargon. Again, where Laidlaw's parodies of social dialect are succinct, Womack's are tortured and bizarre. The Owners, who own everything, use bizspeak. "We'll shortterm," they say, "You viabled?"

Womack's narrative structure for this bloodshot vision is a cheerfully crude crime thriller. His hero Seamus, a crime-lord's goon, is double-crossed when ordered to stiff the boss's father, a tyrant of the old South. He goes on the lam with Avalon, the boss's moll, whose jeans are so tight she zips them up with pliers. There is the obligatory scene in the subway, followed by one in the sewers. The plot batters along with comedic rancour and blue-jowled sarcasm, having nothing very much to contribute but the outraged tenderness of its own emotional aspirations. □

VGSF

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Sparks of real life

Gillian Wilce

Human Nature
D.W. WINNICOTT *Free Association* £20 & £8.95

PAEDIATRICIAN and psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott published, over 40 years, a number of books and papers which were influential within the profession. Particularly through *The Child, the Family and the Outside World*, he also reached a general audience, helping parents to be aware of the vital experiences of small children while reassuring them that "good enough" parenting was all that was needed.

His last book — until now — was published posthumously in 1971, the author having corrected the proofs just before he died. That work, *Playing and Reality*, is a rich exploration of culture and creativity, "what life itself is about", seen as happening, like children's play, in the space between the individual and the environment.

Now, 16 years on, we have a rather different kind of posthumous publication: a book, again aimed at a more general readership, which Winnicott himself never chose to publish. As Clare Winnicott says in her preface, it is in effect the lecture notes which teachers and social workers were unable to make at his courses on "Human Growth and Development" because they were too different, too active, for note-taking. He wrote the first draft in 1954 but went on revising it for the rest of his life without, apparently, ever feeling that it had reached completion.

As Winnicott himself describes it, *Human Nature* "gathers together the various types of experience which have been mine: what I have learned from my teachers and from my clinical experiences. In this way I may achieve a personal and therefore understandably limited description of a theme that is without limits." In the first section he differentiates psyche from soma and discusses a few illnesses resulting from the effects of one upon the other. This is so briefly sketched that you end up not wholly sure whether you have been told anything new or not.

The book becomes more expansive and satisfying as he homes in on emotional development, taking the child's life gradually backwards from the age of four or five to the peri- and even pre-natal period.

First he discusses the necessary emotional adjustments of the child who can recognise the separate existence of more than one adult in his or her life and has to struggle with the turmoil of feelings involved in the Oedipal stage: coping with love and hate and jealousy and fear through adaptive identifications and repressions and the beginnings of a sexual orientation emerging from original bisexuality. He then moves back to the child's earlier growing into a separate person in individual relationship with the "mother-person", offering his own interpretation of Klein's "depressive position" when the child learns to deal with the guilt generated by recognition of his or her own aggression towards the loved object. (In the later *Playing and Reality* he develops a theory of aggression as positively useful to the infant's "creation" of a separate and continuing reality existing outside him or herself.)

Going further back still to the time of the "theoretical first feed", Winnicott next considers how the baby makes an initial relationship with external reality, progressing gradually from unintegration to integration. Finally he returns us to the womb, suggesting that a good start to life is one in which the baby's actions feel as if *they* are eliciting responses — be that in terms of intra-uterine life, contractions or the first appearance of the breast — rather than the environment impinging violently on the baby. The book stops short after a brief return to the subject of psychosomatic illnesses.

With its relatively short precis of a lot of areas and its diagrammatic illustrations, *Human Nature* does read rather like lecture notes. Chapters are divided into very short sections: some are summarised in list form and some aren't; chapters of surprising terseness — a single page on hypochondriacal anxiety, for instance — make rather sudden appearances. There is material here that's well worth having and pondering, but it sometimes feels like reading interruptus, with subjects abruptly terminated just when you expected some elaboration. Winnicott always writes clearly and yet, because of the jerkiness of the structure, it is not always easy to get an immediate purchase on the ideas, especially where they are not already familiar.

Perhaps one of the book's main values will be to provide readers who are looking for a summary of Winnicott's thinking with enough glimpses of his merits as a thinker, clinician and writer to urge them on to his other publications. Among these merits, in addition to the ideas themselves, is a felt warmth of concern about actual people. Even if there isn't here any of the engrossing detail about individuals which can earth the theory in other books, you never feel that theory has become detached from experience, just as Winnicott manages never to sound rigid or prescriptive or judgmental. His own certainties about what he has experienced allow him a relaxed honesty about intellectual uncertainties.

Taking issue with Freud's theory of life and death instincts, for example, he concludes, "It is always possible, however, that I have misunderstood Freud's true meaning." And the book is lit by characteristic flashes of down-to-earth wisdom. Talking about the possibility of a very early splitting off of the hidden true self with its spontaneous feelings from a compliant false self which actually deals with the world, he concludes that "if development proceeds well, the individual becomes able to deceive, to lie, to compromise, to accept conflict as a fact and to abandon the extreme ideas of perfection and an opposite to perfection that make existence intolerable. Capacity for compromise is not a characteristic of the insane. The mature human being is neither so nice nor so nasty as the immature." Elsewhere, speaking of psychic health (achieved through a good enough early development or, later, through psychotherapy), he points out that it has everything to do with the capacity to *live* and nothing to do with freedom from suffering — "probably the greatest suffering in the human world is the suffering of normal or healthy or mature persons." □

ARTS

Short circuit of the New Man

If "Making Mr Right" has had a cool reception from the critics, this might, argues **JUDITH WILLIAMSON**, *be because it really does take a woman's point of view*

THE KEY FACT about the New Man is that he doesn't exist. Variously a marketing concept and a projection of modern women's desires, the emotional, sensitive, tender Loving Hunk is no more real than the Living Doll who was, similarly, an amalgam of consumer products and male fantasies. Of course, no one really noticed at the time how postmodern the Living Doll syndrome really was — that the swinging chick was primarily an image — because pop culture didn't jar, fundamentally, with the male point of view that has never stopped being socially dominant. On the other hand, the Ideal Man, to most women today, is palpably unreal, no matter how many baby-face new male models in pink sweaters pout out from the pages of the *Face*.

So it makes perfect sense that the "New Man" in Susan Seidelman's **Making Mr Right** (15, Chelsea Cinema) is, literally, new: a robot. While it has not been warmly received, the film has been widely reviewed and most people must have got the gist of the plot: Frankie Stone (Ann Magnuson), a PR agent, lands a publicity contract for an android designed for space travel and made in the exact

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I fall to pieces: Ann Magnuson ahead of the times in *Making Mr Right*

image of his scientist creator, Jeff. When she spends time with Ulysses as part of his social programming they gradually fall in love.

Both Jeff and Ulysses are played by John Malkovitch (in a witty visual aside the film acknowledges *The Parent Trap*, where Hayley Mills plays identical twins) and on the face of it this echoes the *doppelganger* theme of Seidelman's *Desperately Seeking Susan*, where Rosanna Arquette finds the wild side of herself in Madonna. Here, however, the interest lies less in Jeff finding (and hating) the "softer" side of himself — the two are never reconciled, least of all in the surprise ending — than in Frankie, or indeed the other women characters, finding a decent date. The film opens with a TV item where Frankie's current boyfriend Steve, who is running for Congress, is shown kissing a beauty queen. Frankie watches from her couch and kicks him out the next morning when he turns up feebly apologising. This deft pre-credit sequence ends with her hurling a lifesize cardboard model of Steve (from his publicity campaign) out of the window and the smiling, waving, two-dimensional man floats onto the road beneath the wheels of her car.

All through the film there is an emphasis on Man as Image: Frankie's friend Trish checks out her actor husband's girlfriends by watching how realistically he kisses his co-stars on a soap opera. Both men and media are seen through *women's* eyes: suitably enough since, as Frankie points out in a business presentation, "women control most of the nation's TV dials and buy 72 per cent of magazines". While Seidelman has always had an eye for the transformations of femininity — Frankie switches from tousled teeshirt to boardroom glamour as she drives to work — the stress here is not on women switching images (as in *Susan*) but in women as *consumers* of images — and of men, in relation to whom the film functions like a *Which* guide.

And all the real models are found lacking. When Frankie arrives at the space lab for the first time, she has to deal with the over-smarmy director on the one hand and the cold, uptight Jeff on the other, carefully steering a route between the familiar poles of harassment and rudeness. It is in this context that she meets Ulysses: and, unlike all the other men in the film, he is open for programming. This offers a fascinating opportunity for Helen Gurley Brown-style training in reverse: Frankie teaches him to make prolonged eye contact and to listen to what his companion's saying "as if it was the most important thing in the world", while from Steve's TV campaign ad he learns concepts like "It takes a man this sensitive to know your needs". Ulysses is like a feminist RoboCop: instead of an unreconstructed male mind in a newly mechanical body, we have a newly constructed open mind in a traditionally good-looking male body. Like RoboCop Ulysses is blond and baby-mouthed but unlike RoboCop he is perfectly suited to female (inasmuch as this is a straight scenario) needs: he combines these features with emotional openness, complete sincerity and — as Frankie finds out by accident — an enormous penis.

On this level the film functions very much within the realms of Girl Talk, i.e. the kinds of things men like to think women *don't* talk about. Frankie and Trish lounge about in bed despairing and giggling — "It was hard enough to find him, and even then he wasn't hard enough" — and the film itself exists within that space between giggling and despair. It takes a woman's point of view completely for granted: unlike, for example, *Broadcast News* which makes a big palaver about its working heroine, it matter-of-factly shows Frankie addressing meetings ("I'm always late, but I'm worth it"), zapping around in her adorable little jackets, giving orders to and getting support from her nice, dumpy male secretary — and this is not the film's *action*, but the *backdrop* to its action. *Making Mr Right* doesn't pathologise its female protagonist because she can't find a suitable man, but shows how inadequate the men available actually *are*. Frankie is often exasperated, but doesn't go around crying: both emotional *and* professional, she is the most sympathetic heroine I've seen in any film for a long time.

Which is all the more interesting because the film (again, unlike *Broadcast News*) makes no pretence at realism. (William Hurt in *BN* is indeed rather like the blond, soft-hearted android — and both films are very much about contemporary media.) But Seidelman's film is *within* the postmodern media idiom: it playfully (never disdainfully) partakes of the surface of modern life. Frankie's punkish sister's wedding, an extravaganza of purple and orange frills, takes place on a beach; for the photos a beach backdrop is set up in front of the real sea, while the reception takes place round an indoor pool. Colour is used boldly and purposively: Frankie's red car and bright outfits are contrasted with the cold blue interior of the lab. References to other films abound: "Nobody's perfect" are Frankie's closing words to Ulysses (who short circuits when he kisses her) — a phrase whose full meaning derives from the echo of their famous prequel, "I'm a man".

So why has this smart little movie failed to catch on? It shares with the successful *Desperately Seeking Susan* a witty, sex-comedy plot, neat acting and a generally postmodern style (which it also shares with the cultish *RoboCop*). But the point about *Making Mr Right* is that, unlike many "modern woman" films, it really is a Women's Picture. Forget post*modern*: this is post *men*. No wonder critics have so fervently dismissed it. □

TELEVISION

Not playing the game

W. Stephen Gilbert

WEREN'T YOU THRILLED to read that ITV's Network Controllers Group has lobbied the IBA to allow the ITV companies to transmit more game shows? No? Oh, *I* was. After all, there's already more television that I want to see than I can reasonably get around to. A few more programmes that I feel no compulsion to bother with will be most welcome.

What *is* it about game shows? It's not only that so many of them make their appeal to the lowest common denominator, in the whole ethos that they seek to imply as well as in the narrowness of the definition of knowledge that they subscribe to. It's also that they rupture an innocent and rather beautiful old tradition of parlour games, turning them into garish and deeply reactionary expressions of triumphal acquisitiveness. It can be no coincidence that most of the "show biz personalities" who turned out for Thatcher's election bash were game show hosts.

Of the current crop, two stand jackboot-high in the repulsion stakes. **Love Me Love Me Not** is an attempt by TVS to emulate the genuinely addictive mix of charm and embarrassment that sustains LWT's *Blind Date*. Four young men, all "hunky lads" in co-host Nino Firetto's hard-sell phrase, sit in a row of what look like artily delicate versions of Lucy's "The Doctor Is In" booth in Charles Schulz's *Peanuts*. They have to read out pieces of nonsense prepared for them by the show's writers. Two women (variously accounted "ladies" and "girls" but never, of course, "women") have to venture whether the given statements are true or

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false. "Really", explains co-hostess Debbie Greenwood, "it's another battle of the sexes." That's all right, then.

Much the same formula works on *Call My Bluff* because three seasoned broadcasters know the value of authentic frivolity. The fact that the BBC pays stars good money to pretend to be clever and spontaneous inspires no resentment when the result is urbane and benign. The TVS thing is entirely another matter. Far from being a battle of sexes in any meaningful sense, it is a battle *against* sex, an aggressive attempt to dragoon the sexes into gender definition. In the edition I saw, one of the contestants was black. The ethnicisation of participatory television — long overdue — was bound to creep in once the issue of tokenism has been fought out. But you simply couldn't miss the difference, given that the game is intended as a gigantic flirtation, between his function in the proceedings and the way the three white "hunks" were handled. Inevitably, he was "eliminated."

Firetto and Greenwood embody the show's "ideal" coupling. Last week, the former took the lion's share of the presentation but I don't doubt his look-at-me-Ma approach always marginalises Greenwood. But neither of them has any style, wit, presence or presence of mind; and the game requires no such attribute of the contestants either. Indeed, the laborious reading-out of the dreary true/false statements is a liability in so far as the show's down-market catchment doesn't coincide with a social group that prizes the skills of reading aloud (or reading at all). Lacking other enticements, producer Brian Wesley falls back on an appeal to the leering instinct (one of the women participants pursued a career in kissograms) and fills his studio with unrestrained *siffleurs*.

If *Love Me Love Me Not* is television's latest idea of consumer sex — the stylisation of the chat-up as public entertainment — the BBC's latest daytime daily, **Four Square**, can only be a government-backed scheme to shame the unemployed out of the house. According to presenter Michael Groth (I suspect you pronounce it "Gross"), this is a "gnlnoj" game. In the circumstances, you can see he wouldn't want to emphasise any connection with such an honorable old notion as "general knowledge"; the relentless rise of the board game "Trivial Pursuit" has, by its very pitch, legitimated a desire for mindless diversion and banished the horror of worthiness associated with an interest in *gnlnoj*. So here the retrieval of what used to be called useless information is rewarded with commonplace consumer durables. The game's mechanics are sound enough and some of the questions assume a breadth of culture not generally available to the show's constituency.

But it is the self-serving tone set by the presenter that provides all the show's signifiers. Receiving not the merest ripple of reaction to his third-hand impersonation of Ronald Reagan, Groth simply essays it again. At the start he cries: "Don't the days fly by, eh?" This is a private joke for the studio audience who get to see several days' worth of editions recorded back-to-back. The contempt for the viewers implicit in all this is remarkable. The rumbling you can hear is John Reith's celestial apoplexy.

Thames's new contribution to the genre suggests more thought than the above: describing itself as a combination of language and bingo, its neat title is **Lingo**. The game itself isn't exactly taxing stuff. Two (married) couples compete to find a five-letter word, collecting its letters by trial, error and good sense. A random element of (somewhat laboured) delving into a drum for numbered bingo balls helps them fill an electronic bingo card. The jackpot prize of £3,200 is among the highest around; one of the innate contradictions of the genre is that they generate acquisitiveness while so often offering derisory rewards.

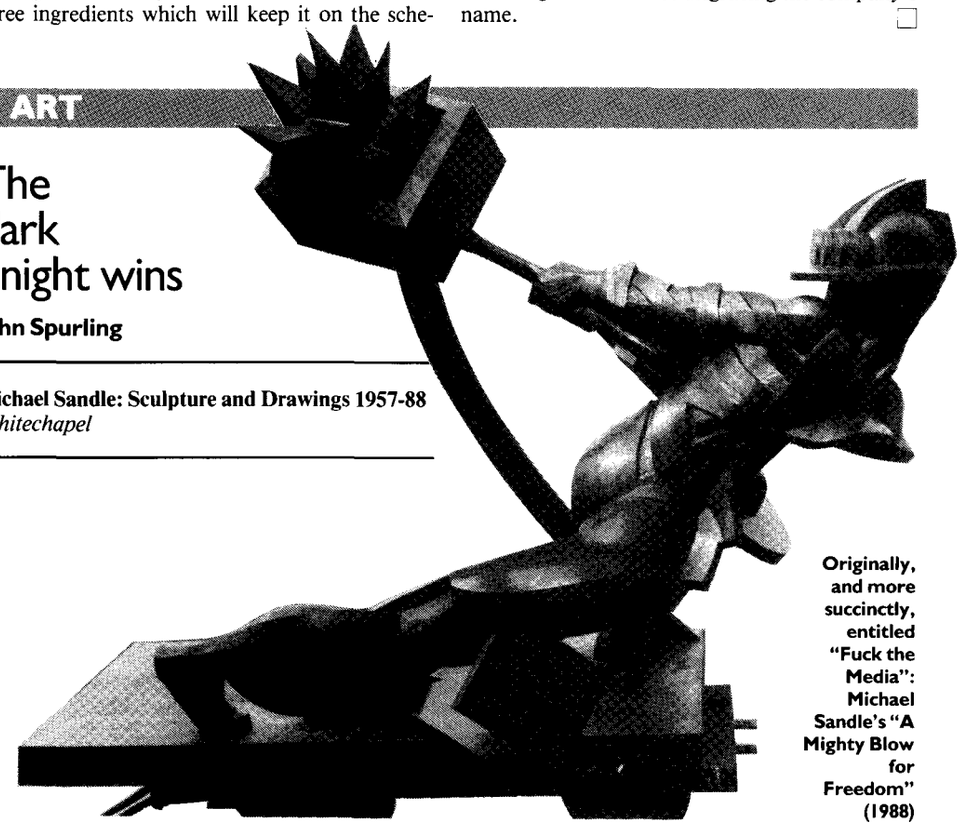
Lingo is certainly no *Mastermind*. But it has three ingredients which will keep it on the schedules: it easily seduces you into competing with its contestants; it manages to generate a real tension; and its host Martin Daniels looks capable of keeping the patter going without resort to feeble gags, poor impersonations or offensive asides and without the painful false mateyness that characterises the game-show manner of his father Paul. If Thames could get rid of the disco music that seems to cast it in 1976 and find a way to put its guests more at their ease, this one might win a loyal following as well as not disgracing the company's name. □

ART

The dark knight wins

John Spurling

Michael Sandle: Sculpture and Drawings 1957-88
Whitechapel



Originally, and more succinctly, entitled "Fuck the Media": Michael Sandle's "A Mighty Blow for Freedom" (1988)

BORN IN WEYMOUTH and reared mostly in the Isle of Man, Michael Sandle, now 52, is a professor at the Karlsruhe Academy of Art in south-west Germany. But although he has not lived in this country for 28 years and has been disgracefully ignored by the Tate, which until two years ago owned only one lithograph by him and never displayed anything, his work has been shown regularly here in group exhibitions, as well as at Fischer Fine Art, his London gallery.

Now, with a major sculpture in the Tate ("The Drummer", presented by the RA's Chantrey Bequest in 1986), his huge bronze "St George and the Dragon" recently sited in an office forecourt near Blackfriars Bridge and this retrospective at the Whitechapel, he has evidently triumphed over whatever dragons, art-establishment figures or other dark forces were holding him at bay across the sea.

The resistance he's encountered has been due, I should say, partly to his fascination with dark forces and partly to his indecently exposed ambition. The immense, shiny-black, canopied plinth which confronts you as you enter the Whitechapel's downstairs gallery was called after Stravinsky's "Monumentum pro Gesualdo". The elements assembled on the plinth — two giant ink-wells with quills jutting out, like that in one of the cautionary tales from *Struwwelpeter*, and a gramaphone horn-cum-snail-shell — share the tongue-in-cheek, cartoon quality of '60s' Pop (the piece was made in 1966-9); yet the general effect is much more sinister. Indeed the thing virtually stuffs Pop back down its own throat, sending-up the send-up and re-asserting both the monumentality of sculpture (even when made of fibreglass) and the function of art as a device for dealing with mortality rather than as innocent decoration, child's play or social satire. Gesualdo himself (Italian duke, wife-killer and innovatory composer) was a real-life character from Jacobean tragedy, but Sandle's later pieces show less of a deep, dark Jacobean than an apocalyptic, late 19th-century imagination.

Upstairs, among his smaller monuments in bronze, is a "Catafalque for Anton Bruckner"; "The Drummer" could be seen as a visualised theme from Mahler or Nielsen. The drawings and watercolours include a burning Nazi tank in a German fir forest; a red horse galloping away through an arcade behind a scene of destruction; a skeleton manning a bulldozer behind another heap of burning rubble; volcanoes erupting; a plain rectangular tomb set about with broken arcs and a wreath, its top glowing red, its title "Sic Transit Gloria Mundi". This apparently lush romanti-

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cism, however, is always curbed by the composition so that if one could see the drawings purely as technical feats and ignore the subject-matter, one would be less aware of chaos and destruction than of the rigour with which it is organised into an image.

In the sculpture this opposition is more obvious: Sandle's *fin-de-siècle* imagination is spiked with the bitter, ribald cynicism of the 20th century. If Hitler's unquiet spirit were to take comfort at the news that Sandle had immortalised him and Eva Braun on their Berlin funeral pyre with the sonorous Wagnerian title "Untergang des Dritten Reiches," it would recoil again in humiliated fury to discover that they actually resemble the remains of a nasty little garden bonfire, with rubbish and petrol cans strewn about, and that the hero himself, with his tall dunce's cap, comes out of Ensor or Dix rather than the great German legend.

Likewise, the glittering golden bronze of the over-life-size machine-gun, the cushions and Mickey Mouse/missile heads neatly laid out for "A Twentieth Century Memorial" (inspired by the war in Vietnam) might be thought to celebrate the unloveliest aspects of the United States — its Ramboism, wealth and comfort — but the black, partly disintegrated Mickey Mouse skeleton propped against the cushions behind the gun, its rib-cage distortedly echoing the crisp belt of bullets flowing into the gun, annihilates all the organisation and tarnishes the glitter.

"The Drummer" of 1985 was Sandle's first sculpture to rise, as it were, from the dead, to stand up and suggest movement, though of a clogged and funereal kind. St George, by contrast, stretching in his stirrups and leaning over his horse's neck to stab the fat snake spiralling down away from him, is aggressively alive. Sandle has said that he would have liked to have shown the dragon winning, but in the event it looks no match for this powerfully bunched horse and rider, bearing down on it from a grid set at an angle of nearly 45 degrees.

His most recent piece, "A Mighty Blow for Freedom," finished just in time for the exhibition, is still more energetic and heroic: a Futuristic woman, wearing a Mercury-style helmet, leaning far out from her plinth in the act of swinging an axe through an exploding TV set. There is nothing fanciful about it except the pose (even the helmet might be a building-site worker's or sculptor's as well as a Greek god's), since Sandle once axed his own TV set — and his mother many years ago put a poker through his radio — but no doubt it also symbolises Sandle's new sense of freedom and capacity.

It will be curious to see, now that he has so suddenly allowed himself to show the dark forces roundly crushed, what resistance he will find to whet his ambition on. The cover of the catalogue, decorated with a drawing labelled "First thoughts for Blackfriars project", may provide an answer. Across the Thames, between Blackfriars road and railway bridges are three rows of empty pillars. Sandle's drawing suggests that they might bear an enormous frieze of angled grids with leaping lions and horses and helmeted men. The prospects seems at least equivalent to restoring the rest of Shelley's Ozymandias, King of Kings, to those "vast and trunkless legs of stone" in the desert and would make "St George and the Dragon" look like a maquette, but I wouldn't bet against his succeeding. □

THEATRE

Through Irish eyes

Victoria Radin

The Shaughraun
DION BOUCICAULT *Olivier*
The Factory Girls
FRANK McGUINNESS *Riverside Studios*
The Worm in the Heart
NELL McCAFFERTY *Drill Hall*

"WOULDN'T IT BE NICE to be on the winning side," declares the heroine of *The Worm in the Heart*. The impression one gains from the plays now comprising an unofficial Irish festival in London — running in tandem with the Riverside Studios' *Sense of Ireland* season — is of a country condemned to be on the losing side. Fancy and a gift of the gab and the fab run through all of them: with affectionate self-parody in the early work but an embittered sense of disharmony in the contemporary ones. Ireland needs a healthier self-image.

Dion Boucicault's **The Shaughraun**, first produced in 1874, effectively banished the previous stereotype of the dim, blustering Irishman. In its stead came the clever and highly articulate rascal who was capable of charming an English soldier, if not England herself, into collusion. Boucicault, writing some 15 years after the emergence of the Fenians, makes one of his lads an active member and the others sympathisers of the Brotherhood, but loses the question of their future behind some adroit plot machinery and tender characterisations. Having established his clan of Irish folk as distinct from his Irish thugs as natural aristocrats on a par with the good-hearted and classy English officer sent to rout their Fenian friend, the Dublin-born author is content to let things rest. He gives us a group of losers who succeed (in a circumscribed way) in becoming winners and there is nothing more universally appealing than that.

Howard Davies' staging of this delightful period piece will surely be ranked as one of the National Theatre's triumphs. Bill Dudley's revolving set of vaulted Gothic ruins, crumbling statuary, seaside clifftops and gargoyled villains' shelters pauses between scenes to make the stage equivalent of the cinematic establishing shot before whirling away to the setting at home. It creates a definite sense of the country of Ireland as the major character of the evening. The Shaughraun of the piece (it means vagabond), an Erroll Flynnish role which the author once performed, is attractively underplayed by Stephen Rea as a hangdog scamp dressed in an outsize hunting pink from which he produces an infinite store of whiskey and poached grouse. The plot concerns his derring-do in freeing the falsely imprisoned inheritor of a decaying Irish estate to the happy conclusion of three courtships. Chief among them — and the major achievement of Boucicault's writing — is the Beatrice and Benedict-like romance between the proud but vulnerable Irish Claire (Felecity Montagu, all

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bustle and impudence) and the inhibited but big-hearted English Captain Molyneux (Shaun Scott timidly charming) which becomes a distillation of opposing national characteristics without losing any of its psychological accuracy.

On the opening night Stephen Moore's scheming property thief and woman-stealing villain was hissed. This is melodrama, and not all of it impervious to Irish stereotyping (Gillian Barge has to go a long way to account for the Shaughraun's breast-beating, consummately dim Oirish mother); but the cast plays so infectiously, and with such evident fun, that the evening has no hint of that fixed-smile deadliness I found in the RSC's attempts at romps like *Fair Maid of the West*. Here is a robustness, even a sexiness.

Perhaps the strong young women of the play, cheated of their estate a final time and come to Donnegal for work, might have turned eventually into the oppressed shirt-checkers of **The Factory Girls**. Frank McGuinness' play, like his later, prize-winning *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme*, puts a group of differing types of people of one sex in a tight spot in one room and uses this to make them explore their lives.

The five checkers in a shirt factory — who presumably never wear the fruits of their labour — are, except for the youngest, "girls" only by dint of their subservience within and without the factory walls. Una (Doreen Hepburn) is old enough to remember walking out in wartime with an American GI who dumped her; her mate, the tough-talking Ellen, nicknamed Godzilla (Pat Leavy), saw her three children die of TB. Rosemary (Tina Kellegher) is the silent one whose rivers run deep, and naturally, in this schematic play, there is a hint of lesbianism. Men are referred to as "old shites": when two of them turn up to force the girls into lower wages they are as incompetent and shabby-minded as their (male) creator can make them. When the women stage a sit-in, a husband exerts moral blackmail to bring her home and the priest refuses their plea of a special Mass. The final moments of the play see the women workers, having gone through an extended group therapy session nearly entirely for our benefit, giving up their protest. The play is saved from its anartistic Good Intentions and misery-cataloguing didacticism by the authenticity of its actresses.

My favourite image of the Dublin journalist Nell McCafferty's first play is that of the speaker's mother dancing with her father, torn between the wallet in his chest announcing he's kept back his pay and his hand in the small of her back pressing her on to the waltz. Romance is **The Worm in the Heart** in this one-woman monologue, or so its heroine tells us. But on the evidence of its fairly embittered first-generation woman engineer, born to the "last of the full-time mothers", romance is a pretty dodgy concept.

The burden of McCafferty's strange diatribe against the world is that to be Irish and a woman is to be doubly a loser. Set in Southern Ireland, it tells us a bit about subjects ranging from the feminist position on Northern Ireland (there isn't one) to the parliamentary secretaries' occupation of the men's loos in the Dail, in tones which usually contain too much generalised bitterness to be effective. Directed by Gillian Hackett, it does succeed in introducing Londoners to Ruth McCabe, another female Irish performer of awesome persuasiveness. □

VIDEO

Cooking for terrorists

Julian Petley

Early scratch video was a pirate: it plundered sounds and images, sliced them to shreds, rearranged them regardless of narrative laws. Half a decade on, what's become of it?

NOTHING MORE CLEARLY illustrates capitalism's ability to turn protest into profit than this: the transformation of scratch video from a weapon of guerilla warfare to just another flourish in the ad-men's repertoire of second-hand images.

The fact that scratch has been hijacked, however, shouldn't blind us to its achievements. Looking back at **The Greatest Hits of Scratch**, Volumes One and Two, one is still struck by the considerable, almost Eisensteinian, force of the Duvet Brothers' montages in *Blue Monday, War Machine* and *Till Death to Apartheid*, and the sensuous visual and aural qualities of George Barber's *Scratch Free State, Tilt, Yes Frank No Smoke,* and *Absence of Satan*. It was Barber, in fact, who put the two compilations together — and he has since gone on to become one of the most interesting figures from the scratch moment.

Barber first became seriously involved in video at St Martins College of Art, which he left in 1980. From 1982 to 1984 he studied video at postgraduate level at the Slade, exploring his interest not only in film and television but also in painting. His leanings in these rather different directions resulted in a final show which he describes as "mingling disco music and video art together, without deliberate irony, for the first time".

He says that he has always been drawn to the "lushness of the look of the televisual and filmic image" and this is certainly borne out by his contributions to the two *Greatest Hits* compilations, which, with surprisingly modest resources, combine highly treated images and equally densely mixed soundtracks. In particular *Yes Frank No Smoke* stunningly resumes the watery images that haunt Barber's work, taking under-sea shots from *The Deep* and *The Blue Lagoon* and completely reworking them in a way that enhances their visual qualities and divorces them from their original narrative purposes. Meanwhile, *The Brotherhood of Satan* and *Absence of Malice* are ransacked and re-integrated in *Absence of Satan*: mundane actions, casual phrases, everyday gestures are repeated over and over to chime with the pounding pulse of the soundtrack, rendering the familiar strange and achieving moments of lyricism as powerful as they are mysterious.

On the basis of such work, it isn't surprising that Barber was selected as the first recipient of a grant (about £2,000) from the £50,000 video fund which the BFI Production Board set up last year. The result, **Taxi Driver 2,** bears comparison with Mark Wilcox's *Calling the Shots* (reviewed *NS* 15 April).

Here, Barber's evident fascination with the glittering surface of Hollywood imagery moves away from an exploration of the play of surface flow, from stripping images of their narrative significance and working on their purely formal qualities, towards articulating a new narrative structure. This revolves around Tim West, an advertising executive who is also developing a C4 programme on cooking for terrorists. Disillusioned by the hyper-reality of the media world, he joins a Robert de Niro evening class, but also falls under the pastoral influence of Johnny Morris.

From the opening images of night-time, car-ridden streets accompanied by langorous sax on the soundtrack, through to the sub-Chandleresque voice-over narration ("My name is Tim West, I've always been a bit of a loner at the ad agency") *Taxi Driver 2* strikes you with its sly knowingness. But it's more than just a clever-clever nod in the direction of contemporary *film noir*, just as it's more than an incestuous joke at the expense of the London-based media world: it is also a telling comment on the contemporary media culture of postmodernism. As Tim's voice-over puts it, while the endless traffic rolls on: "At work 100, maybe 200 ideas are thought up every day, but when I go home at night and lie down they all seem the same." In this context, the macho movie posturings of De Niro are as much of a dead-end response to modern urban angst as the gentler illusions conjured by Johnny Morris' TV persona.

Similar concerns run through **The Venetian Ghost**, also funded by the BFI (though at £10,000 this cost a good deal more than its predecessor). Here, the ghost of an 18th-century Venetian Doge finds itself living in a shallow, superficial household on Venice Beach, California. The role of the ghost was originally envisaged for Spaulding Gray and much of the humour emerges from the Doge's comments on the soap-style domestic dramas of Charlie, his unwitting host. But the real strength of the video is in its elegiac, melancholy shots of amusement parks, freeways, streets and shopping malls over which the Doge muses Kundera-like on life in the perpetual present: "To Charlie the only thing important in life is style and good times. It's funny living with a guy with no memory."

Fuzzy shots of Venice alternate with images of American consumerdom as the Doge ponders on how "people today spend so much time thinking how life could be. Everywhere you look there are pictures telling you how to lead your life, but when I look at them all I see is death . . . How people long for these things while deliberately letting them pass by". In the end, of course, Charlie and his ilk come to seem even more insubstantial than the ghost, the Doge's Venice more real than the soulless, memoryless streets, shops and beaches.

Both *Taxi Driver 2* and *The Venetian Ghost* refuse to fit easily into video art or narrative fiction categories, but that is precisely the source of their fascination and pleasure. An analogy might perhaps be found in Godard, circa *Deux ou trois choses*, where the narrative is constantly and playfully fractured by other elements, where different kinds of narration jostle against each other, where lyricism and humour overlap and a particular story is "enlarged" in such a way as to take on wider resonances. □

With the exception of "The Venetian Ghost", all of George Barber's videos are available from London Video Arts, 23 Frith Street, London W1V 5TS. "The Venetian Ghost" will be shown next month at the Piccadilly Film Festival.

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Historic symbol

Albert Beale, London N1

In a review of an exhibition of the work of designer Neville Brody (*NS* 6 May), reference is made to his attempted redesign of "CND's logo", thereby perpetuating a common historical myth.

The famous design was actually intended as a symbol for nuclear disarmament in general; it was not designed by or for any particular organisation. Specifically, it was designed by Gerald Holtom for use on the 1958 London to Aldermaston march, which was organised from the Peace News offices by the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War — an organisation which predated CND.

Nicolas Walter, London N1

The executive committee of CND did consider the official registration of the symbol later in 1958, but soon abandoned the idea in the face of its free use throughout the movement in this country and then the world. Any attempt to identify one of the most famous universal symbols of our age with a particular organisation should be resisted and refuted.

Thatcher's shrine

Pete Landells, Holsworthy, Devon

In failing to sample the delights of Lightwater Valley (*NS* 6 May) Francis Wheen missed an open-air hell, a cross between Breughel and Kafka, the sky rent with the cries of the persecuted. The screams of the damned are only abated when their mouths are choked with fast food.

At the time of my visit, there was no licensed bar, and it was never too soon to seek solace elsewhere and to reflect that the majority of the undeserving victims were children. Lightwater Valley is a shrine to Thatcherism where vacuity is to be encouraged and exploited. Only by mutilating the English language can this enterprise be described as "leisure".

After Chernobyl

Geoffrey Petty, Worcester

May I take the recent nuclear accident rehearsal at Sellafield one step further? At present if there was a major civil nuclear accident, at a power station for example, the CEGB would pay up to £20 million in compensation to the general public for damage, or loss of use of property due to the accident. Claims for compensation over this £20 million would be met by central government. [Nuclear Installations Act '65]. To put this in perspective £20 million would fully compensate agricultural land within about one mile of the accident, or would cover one substantial street in a town. Chernobyl, not the largest accident conceivable by a long way, cost the USSR more than £5,000 million.

But what happens after privatisation? According to the Department of Energy, central government will *still* take responsibility for any claims over £20 million. (I have a letter to this effect from A.R. Coleman Dept. of Energy in answer to a letter I sent to the Secretary of State for Energy.) So in effect, having sold off this piece of family silver,

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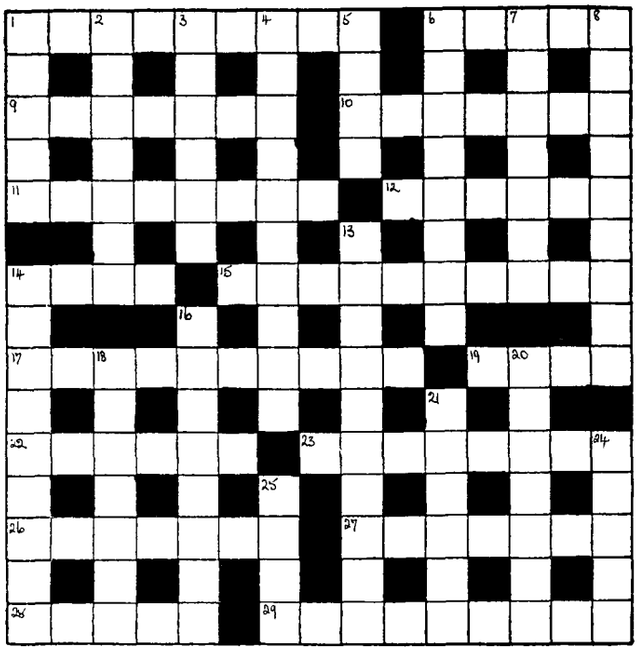
Weekend Crossword 1595

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1595, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post 6 June.



Name_____

Address_____

Solutions to both Salamanca 133 and 134 will appear next week.

ACROSS

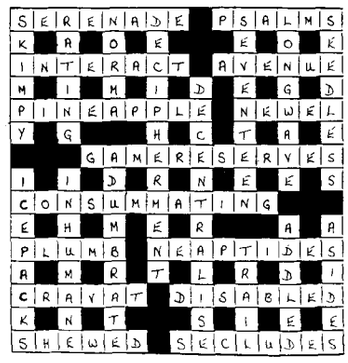
1. Take it before meals for exercises during wild parties (9)
6. If the king were in this town you would have to give support (5)
9. The police leave carrying damaged tapes (7)
10. Tax conversation with her in France (7)
11. Top person seen up on the roof (8)
12. Revolutionary painter? (6)
14. Suitable for a sporting occasion (4)
15. Points of entry which allow one to beat veteran skinheads (10)
17. In their transport couples carry an article given by a doctor (10)
19. Singles winners (4)
22. Strine needs translating so puts down under (6)
23. Protection for soldiers when the Irish are about to commit a crime (8)
26. Formerly a show-off, now a publicist? (7)
27. Entertainer in unemployment would lose heart (7)
28. In torment I describe watery movements (5)
29. Display of athleticism given a round of applause by the partnership (9)

DOWN

1. The language of progress in painting (5)
2. Cost of broadcasting nine (7)
3. Mystical experience needs one to be unusually certain (6)
4. The plane made an announcement before a near miss (10)
5. Old clothes for charitable events (4)
6. The slipper produces a cry of pain in a child (8)
7. Officer has a company with a single beginner (7)
8. Unfinished article on signs of damp in food (9)
13. Disorderly place has to be arranged differently (10)
14. I put in two small amounts for a woman (9)
16. Supporters whose weapons are about to remain unused (8)
18. Academic holds an animal up as something to write on (7)
20. Division of foot needed when artillery follows bad cause (7)
21. If women lose their head they are fools (6)
24. Drug taken to help one in a race (5)
25. Chief for a time without a capital (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1593



Prizewinners to 1593

Ms E.M.S. Petrie (Glasgow)
Richard Pearce (Lincoln)
Hazel Stanley (Basingstoke)

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the government will continue to pay for its insurance. The reason for the government underwriting the privatised nuclear industry is presumably that no insurance company has sufficient assets to compensate for a major nuclear accident, so the nuclear industry is in principle uninsurable.

Cumbrian sheep farmers have been trying to extract compensation from government with little success, and no household insurance policy covers nuclear accidents because of the '65 Nuclear Installations Act. So would it be too cynical to say that as far as nuclear accidents are concerned, our homes are uninsured, and uninsurable? Alternatively if the government *is* prepared to honour its pledge to compensate after a nuclear accident, how can it justify, post privatisation, using public funds to underwrite private profits?

A question of Greekness

Dr. J.H. Coakley, Liverpool

Elgy Gillespie's article (*NS* 6 May) gave some fascinating insights into the American Presidential election campaign, but left unanswered what for me has been the most critical question of the entire show — what is the correct plural form of the Dukakis surname? This issue is obviously going to be with us for some time, and as a lifelong Hellenophile I thought I could tidy things up a bit.

Dukakis is a Greek name and therefore the plural Dukakii (as used by both Michael and his Oscar-winning sister Olympia) is clearly out since it is a Latin plural of which the singular would be Dukakus. Dukakoi at least has Greekness to commend it but would be the plural of Dukakos. Dukakis' and Dukakises are clumsy and Anglo-Saxon and would surely alienate the largely Mediterranean and eastern European immigrant populations on whose votes Dukakis is relying. Assuming that the Senator wishes to retain some of his Greekness (or "Romiosini") he should stick to the correct plural of his name which is Dukakides. The fact that he is able even to contemplate using Dukakii suggests to me that his Greek is not quite up to scratch although he has no doubt been coached sufficiently to deliver a few stock phrases; the only one I have heard him use was "tha nikisoume" — we will win. He is probably right: after all he knows the competition better than we do!

Learning curve

Dave Redman, London N16

Anthony Barnett does not begin to open up the questions which the notion of "democratisation" begs (*NS* 6 May). How can democracy orchestrated from above become democracy moved from below? Is the proposed workplace democracy more than a device for compensating workers for the increased demands placed upon them? To what degree is democratisation a political strategy designed to consolidate the position of a reformist leadership, in a similar way that "destalinisation" was for Khrushchev? How will democratisation affect the power of the party apparatus to make appointments to state and party positions — the source of its control? It is right to identify the emergence of a civil society but this has been neither institutionalised nor does it yet represent a self-propelling movement which can take democracy beyond the confines of a vehicle for economic efficiency and modernisation.

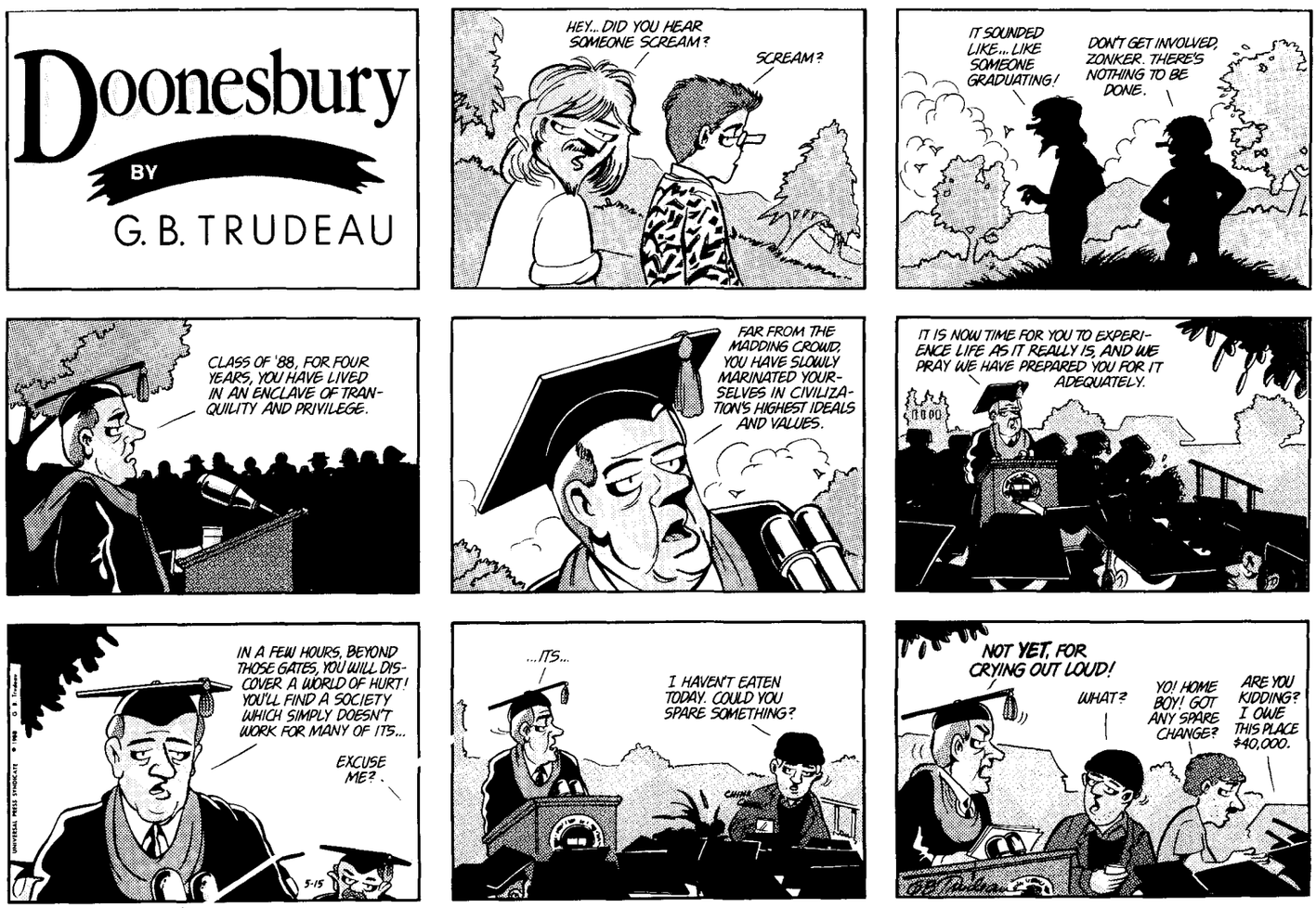
In the end is Gorbachev's vision one of democratic socialism or something else? If the result in 20 years is some kind of meritocracy with the CP entrenched at its apex, it would certainly be an improvement on the present; it may even be radical; but it might not be either democratic or socialist. By oversimplifying the politics of the USSR and by taking politicians at their word Anthony Barnett does not raise the questions which must be important if we in the West are to learn from the Soviet experience.

Solidarity in the Tories

Professor John Honey, University of Bophuthatswana, Mmabatho

Roger Woddis's verses (*NS* 6 May) echo a point I have also heard made by Paul Foot. Both gentlemen claim to find it incongrous that conservatives should cheer on Solidarity in Poland while demanding curbs on trade union activities in Britain.

But is it really so incongruous to support trade unions which may represent the sole expression of the will of the people in totalitarian states, while


Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
HEY... DID YOU HEAR SOMEONE SCREAM?
SCREAM?
IT SOUNDED LIKE... LIKE SOMEONE GRADUATING!
DON'T GET INVOLVED, ZONKER. THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE.
CLASS OF '88, FOR FOUR YEARS, YOU HAVE LIVED IN AN ENCLAVE OF TRANQUILITY AND PRIVILEGE.
FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, YOU HAVE SLOWLY MARINATED YOURSELVES IN CIVILIZATION'S HIGHEST IDEALS AND VALUES.
IT IS NOW TIME FOR YOU TO EXPERIENCE LIFE AS IT REALLY IS, AND WE PRAY WE HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR IT ADEQUATELY.
IN A FEW HOURS, BEYOND THOSE GATES, YOU WILL DISCOVER A WORLD OF HURT! YOU'LL FIND A SOCIETY WHICH SIMPLY DOESN'T WORK FOR MANY OF ITS...
EXCUSE ME?
...ITS...
I HAVEN'T EATEN TODAY. COULD YOU SPARE SOMETHING?
NOT YET, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
WHAT?
YO! HOME BOY! GOT ANY SPARE CHANGE?
ARE YOU KIDDING? I OWE THIS PLACE $40,000.

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wanting to limit their powers in democratic states where certain uses of such powers are perceived as unacceptable to the great majority of the people?

Macho culture

Yvonne Roberts, London SW4

Andrew Davies (letters 6 May) is indulging in fantasy. He writes in criticism of my piece on John Duffy, the "Railway Murderer", and his link with survivalism and the martial arts that he observed the same Wishu class as I did. I was the only observer that evening (one of five) and if some of those taking part in the class were "experienced", then why had they told me they had only been training for a matter of months?

Martial arts weapons are on sale in shops and through mail order firms. So much so, that the Government is bringing in legislation to control their sale and the responsible owners of martial arts mail order companies have agreed that the more lethal weapons should no longer be advertised. Swords, knives and axes are sold as "authentic" and made of "steel" and "metal" (wooden imitations are available and clearly marked as such.)

Mr Davies tells me that I "could have gleaned much useful information on violence and rape" if I had "consulted the police". Why on earth would I want to do that when for so many years the police were (and, in some cases, still are) so misinformed on both issues and the way they affect women? What I know about violence and rape comes from the first-hand experience of women and the now copious amount of research carried out by women's groups such as the Rape Crisis Centres and (mainly female) academics and lawyers.

Mr Davies says the martial arts clubs have a high proportion of women. He asks: "Are we to apply Ms Roberts' hypothesis to women: 'All we need is one young lady out of touch with her emotions?' " The answer is "no", Mr Davies, because in your defensiveness on the issue of the martial arts, you totally miss the point of the piece. To repeat yet again, it tried to argue that society's view of masculinity and the pressures it exercises may persuade some immature men that they can find an identity in the exaggerated aspects of survivalism and the martial arts. And that is a danger to us all. In short, what is at fault is not the martial arts but the macho culture which attempts to hijack it. A culture which, incidentally, also encourages the patronising tone which seeps through Mr Davies' letter.

Zoology lesson

S.G. Gibson, London SE18

You seem to think that the individual must be sacrificed to the good of the community, and made to conform to the communal good by the induction of guilt (*NS* leader 29 April) I know you can't help it — comes with the culture and all that: ". . . to believe that acquisitive individualism can be combined with . . . community and caring . . . is simply illogical". I submit, it is not. Consider the pelican: two of these birds, fishing co-operatively, can each catch more than either one fishing singly. It is to the acquisitive advantage of both of them to cooperate. There are numerous other examples of this kind of thing in biology.

Surely a good line for the left to take would be that community actually makes you better off as an individual, both materially and psychically, thus out-Thatcherising Thatcherism itself.

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WARM, WITTY, watery woman (38) + child. Loves books, sunny landscapes, London seeks firm, tender relationship with man. Box (20)0039.

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APPOINTMENTS

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Duration of project is uncertain but it is likely to be at least one year. A degree, preferably in an Arts subject is essential. Candidates should be able to demonstrate a capacity for independent research.

If interested, please send a full C.V. to Mr Jones at Box (20) 0048.

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APPOINTMENTS

Continued from p.35

Contact **Carol Anne Brown** **01-739 1645** to place your recruitment advertising

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

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Application forms obtainable from the Borough Personnel Officer, Ealing Civic Centre, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London W5 2HL Tel: 01-840 1995. Please quote appropriate reference. Ealing's new Council welcomes applications from all regardless of sex, race, ethnic origin, responsibility for dependants, from people with disabilities and from lesbians and gay men.

Ealing

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Candidates should have sound political knowledge, an understanding of different cultures and experience of working with an activist membership organisation. They must have proven managerial ability and be able to work under pressure. Fluent English is essential, knowledge of other languages, especially French, Spanish or Arabic, highly desirable. Salary: Starts at £15,987 from September, rises to £16,770 in April 1989 (annual increments, index-linked).

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms 24 June 1988.

Interviews scheduled for weeks commencing 25 July 1988.

For further information and an application form, please contact:

Personnel Office, Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London, WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.
Telephone: 01-837 3805 (24 hour answerphone).

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

HALIFAX BUILDING SOCIETY STAFF ASSOCIATION

hbssa

NATIONAL ORGANISER
c.£12,000

The Halifax Building Society Staff Association is the certificated trade union recognised by the Halifax Building Society to represent its staff, 90% of whom are in membership. As a developing and expanding organisation, the HBSSA is now currently seeking a **National Organiser.**

The post requires energy and commitment, and ability to organise their own work schedule to produce effective results. The work involved is organisational development, in particular, membership recruitment, where a wide range of opportunities exists on a nationwide remit, requiring a heavy travel commitment throughout the United Kingdom.

Applications are invited from individuals of either sex who are members of a Trade Union and who have some experience of the work and organisation of a Union. A salary in the region of **£12,000 is offered.**

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
c.£8,000

An additional Research Assistant is required to expand the existing Research facility of the Halifax Building Society Staff Association, a certificated trade union and the sole organisation recognised for Halifax Building Society staff.

The Research duties include the preparation of background briefing documents, and research reports, and the production of the Association's journal. A further appointment is required to assume principal responsibility for this task together with production of publicity and recruitment material.

Applications are invited from individuals preferably with knowledge of or experience in the preparation of publicity material. A salary in the region of **£8,000 is offered.**

The development of the Research Department is ongoing, and this post would be suitable for recent graduates or post-graduates looking for early work experience in a developing and expanding organisation.

Applications should be made, in confidence, to the **General Secretary, Halifax Building Society Staff Association, Simmons House, 46 Old Bath Road, Charvil, Berkshire RG10 9QR. (0734) 341808.**

The closing date for application is **Monday June 6 1988.**

NUTGW

NATIONAL UNION OF TAILORS AND GARMENT WORKERS

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers with 80,000 members is Britain's largest Union in the textiles and clothing sector. 93% of the members are women. The Union's busy Information and Research Department provides research, information and communications services.

We now have a vacancy for a **Research Assistant** to work on a wide range of issues relevant to the clothing industry. Applicants should have some knowledge of the industry and should have experience of compiling and presenting reports, information etc. quickly and well.

Candidates should have a firm commitment to the Trade Union movement.

Applications in writing, including curriculum vitae, should be sent to: **Alec Smith, General Secretary, NUTGW, 16 Charles Square, London N1 6HP,** not later than **1st June 1988.**

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☐ PGDip Research Methods in the Social Sciences
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☐ Research Degrees in the Social Sciences

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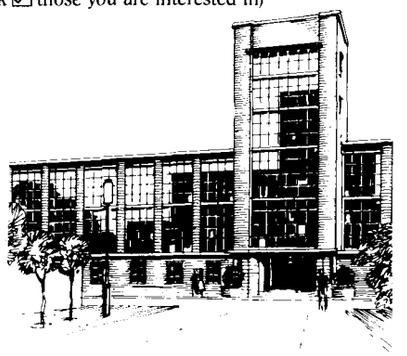

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Theatre

NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) **THE SHAUGHRAUN** by Dion Boucicault, **'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE.** Lyttelton (proscenium stage) **WAITING FOR GODOT, CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF.** Cottesloe (small stage) **CYMBELINE, THE WINTER'S TALE, THE TEMPEST, FANSHEN, A PLACE WITH THE PIGS.** See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-638 8891. Evening Performances 7.30 pm, Matinees 2 pm, Thursday & Saturday. **BARBICAN THEATRE:** May 20-24 **TWELFTH NIGHT,** May 25-26 **THE JEW OF MALTA** by Christopher Marlowe (Final Perfs). **THE PIT:** May 20-24 **THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY** by Cyril Tourneur, May 25-26 **CYMBELINE.**

AGENDA

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

SAT 21 MAY

END DAY SCHOOL on 'Glasnost' & 'Perestroika' in Eastern Europe. Speakers invited include Neal Acheson, Jonathan Steele & Mary Kaldor. Themes: Economics & the Environment, Democracy & Human Rights, Peace Movements. Venue: the Trophy Room, Swiss Cottage Community Centre, Winchester Road, NW3 (Swiss Cottage Tube), 10.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Admission: £1.50/£3.00p. Food available.

WED 25 MAY

NORTH-SOUTH INTERDEPENDENCE – An African Viewpoint. "Aid: Does it Help?". Speaker: H.E. Mr G.U.S. Matlabaphiri (High Commissioner for Botswana). 6.30 pm. Africa Centre, 38 King Street, Covent Garden, London WC2. 01-836 1973.

WED 1 JUNE

SEVENTEENTH CHORLEY LECTURE. Professor Rosalyn Higgins QC will lecture on "Human Rights: Some Questions of Integrity", at 5.30 pm in the Founders' Room, London School of Economics. Admission free without ticket.

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Weekend competition

No 3026 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

The times, as my dear friend Robert used to warn, they are a-changing. "Merge" rhymes with "purge" and — though the Weekend Competition will not only survive but flourish in *New Statesman and Society* — most of your regular Reporters have, to put it bluntly, been given the chop.

Not, you'll be reassured to hear, myself: tempting though it would have been to retire to one of my little places — the castle in Knosos, I thought, for the spring, then summer in the farmhouse in Normandy — I do understand the meaning of Duty and have therefore agreed — in return for the right to smoke wherever I bloody well like, unlimited supplies of Glenfiddich (for me) and of wild Scottish salmon (for the cat) — to remain at my dreary post. But could we, please, have odes of lament for Rosie Hughes, Gray Dorn and Babe Bio and, while we're about it, such great past Reporters as Mercy Dash, Fat Jeff, Jeff Squiffy, Little Keith, the Lemon Kid, PC49, Len the Unlucky or any of the others for whom you feel either warm affection or a long-nursed desire for revenge. Max. 16 lines by 1 June.

No 3023 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Science fiction stories in verse.

Report **by Rosie Hughes**

Oh my treasures, my poppets, what an entry! Those sneering souls who wonder why we review science fiction in our Books pages will surely *now* be convinced that our readers include a large number of experts. For quantity and quality, there hasn't been an entry like this since . . . oh, the beginning of April. Special Mentions to Catherine Benson, C.J.D. Doyle, June Langfield, Sid Field, Keith Norman, Basil Ransome-Davies, Noel Petty, Gerard Benson, Margaret Rogers, Alison Prince, Frank McDonald and Chas. F. Garvey. Twelve pounds a head to the winners and, to Peter Norman, for his *horrible* science fiction poem, an extra £3 plus the biggest cuddle imaginable.

Alien

In Space (where no-one's scream is heard),
Its crew in cryogenic pause,
A home-bound starship's course has erred
Without (at first) apparent cause.

Defrosted fast, the pioneers
Disturb some large, quiescent roe.
A slurp. A crewman disappears
When struck an octopoidal blow.

Intestines burst; a gnashing shape
Burns holes through bulkheads, gives the slip
To fools who trace its swift escape.
Across their entrails let us skip. . .

The science whizz, a bogus bod,
Attempts to let the alien rule.
The Company's been playing God;
But Ripley and her cat stay cool.

WILL BELLENGER

Alien meets alien in space.
Neither likes the other alien's face.
It's a zap, blast, pheeeeeiiww, wheeeiiii, phissshhhh and splat.
One alien's wiped out. And that is that.

KATIE MALLETT

It was a lovely day outside the House of Commons,
When without any particular summons,
A spaceship landed on the grass,
And Mrs Thatcher happened to pass,
And saw an alien that didn't look top brass
But looking just like two bonded blue doormats
And in-between two salted sprats.
It said, "We'll take the space ship up,
Then we'll go home and sup.
There's no point invading here
It's full of prats."

KURT DERELI (AGED 11)

Something sinister came from the stars.
Nothing solid you could put a name to,
no lightship landed leaving a crater,
no bug-eyed visitor from Mars.
It was more a message to my brain
from way, way off but clear as a bell.
It seemed to be a kind of warning
that came in the night and ruined my morning
and had me wondering what the hell.

There are more things, as somebody said,
than you can see on a cinema screen.
Maybe it's fact or maybe it's fancy,
but something filled the holes in my head.
Call it loony but who's to say?
"I guess you're right," I said to Nancy,
"It would be crazy to shit today."

NAOMI MARKS

The Time Machine, by H.G. Wells

I met a traveller from our future land
Who said: A vast and whitened sphinx of stone
Stands in my garden. Nearby on the strand
The Graceful Ones relax, yet leave to drown
Those whose distress they fail to understand.
They swim, eat fruit, make love, yet live in dread
Of darkness. Underground are hideous things,
The Morlocks, working people who keep them fed.
By night some Upper-Worlders disappear;
Slaughtered as cattle though they live as kings.
I drove my Time Machine in deep despair
Back to Victorian England. Will decay
To brutal class disjunction take a bare
Million-odd years, or be less far away?

GAVIN J.S. ROSS

Now the Yux, the bug-eyed monsters,
Land their saucer in Hyde Park,
Zapping fuzz who venture by them,
melting guardsmen for a lark.

Down with these celestial yobbos,
From a distant world unseen,
Spacemen come to harm our Mother,
Brave and golden Leaderene.

Summon SAS, great heroes,
With their "Shoot to Murder" kit
As approved by Mother Thatcher. . .
Metamorphosed into shit.

Gone her grace and sweet compassion,
Gone her wit and merriment,
Taken back to A Centaurie,
Lump of cosmic excrement.

RUSSELL LUCAS

The clock has stopped at ten; he'd gone to bed
At just that time, dreading the day ahead,
Praying that it would never come. "It's morning,"
He murmured at his sleeping wife; then, yawning,
He backed into the bathroom, had a pee
And brushed his teeth enthusiastically.
Then, backing out, he had his first clear sign
Of something wrong: *the clock said half past nine.*
His wife was reading, sitting up in bed.
She smiled at him: "You turning in?" she said.
He backed downstairs in mounting panic. How
Could time reverse itself? Quite helpless now,
He felt his body making cocoa, putting out
The cat . . . He saw his future, shorn of doubt,
Mapped out behind him: from this breakfast room
Through school and cradle to the waiting womb.

PETER NORMAN

THE WORLD'S MOST SUBLIME SKI RESORT

Is the picturesque little hamlet of Gurglgurgl in the Austrian Tyrol. This tiny village is blessed with the largest number of bars and mountain restaurants of any Alpine resort, while at the same time attracting the smallest number of foreigners. In fact, the French don't even know it's there, so the short lift queues are orderly and mercifully free of the waft of stale garlic and the disagreeable sensation of being jabbed in the gluteus maximus with a ski pole. For the tiny minority of mindless hearties who actually go there to ski, the slopes are immaculately groomed and linked by a series of heated cable cars, each with its own sauna and cocktail lounge. The sensible majority, however, tend to spend most of the time sunning themselves on the terraces of the many high-altitude bars. While you relax, Olympic class skiers, wearing a ski suit identical to your own, are photographed doing dare-devil stunts to impress the people back home. So for most visitors, there is hardly any "apres-ski" because there is hardly any "ski." Even the Americans, after a couple of days in this idyllic spot, lose their taste for designer headbands and for crashing down through the powder, whooping at the tops of their voices and scaring the wildlife. Instead, they join the rest of civilisation over a long, cool glass of Merrydown Vintage Cider. Merrydown uses only fine English apples like Bramleys and Cox's in its fermentation, rather than the bitter little cider apples used in more down-to-earth brands. But even though every bottle has to be shipped in by Chisholm and Pagett of Pall Mall, adding considerably to the cost, it is generally agreed that without Merrydown, Gurglgurgl would not be the same. It certainly wouldn't sound the same.

Merrydown. Cider for the few.

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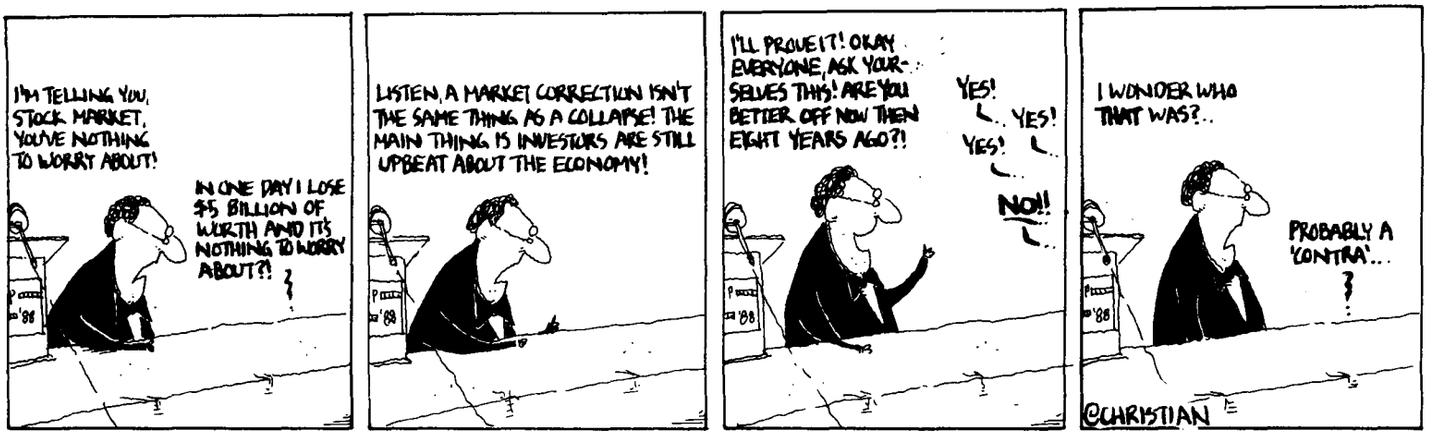
I'M TELLING YOU, STOCK MARKET, YOU'VE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!
IN ONE DAY I LOSE $5 BILLION OF WORTH AND IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT?!
LISTEN, A MARKET CORRECTION ISN'T THE SAME THING AS A COLLAPSE! THE MAIN THING IS INVESTORS ARE STILL UPBEAT ABOUT THE ECONOMY!
I'LL PROVE IT! OKAY EVERYONE, ASK YOURSELVES THIS! ARE YOU BETTER OFF NOW THEN EIGHT YEARS AGO?!
YES!
YES!
YES!
NO!!
I WONDER WHO THAT WAS?..
PROBABLY A 'CONTRA'...
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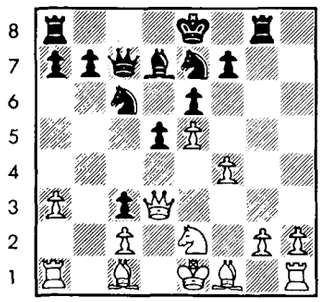
Chess

French Winawer: Main Line



IS THE French Defence in trouble? Can White be sure of an advantage in the main line of the Winawer? Anyone unmoved by these questions must be unversed in the elegance of Uhlmann's games. At least, that's my official justification for the investigation. But I also admit a personal interest, arising from memories of the labour of love that my friend John Moles put into writing *The French Defence: Main Line Winawer* (Batsford 1975). The book itself was a model of objectivity, but, as Moles said in the introduction, you cannot work away on such a thing without acquiring a strong emotional bias for one side or the other.

The French was not in fashion when Moles produced his *opus*. But since then it has become much more popular, with players such as Korchnoi, Timman, Short, Nogueiras and Farago giving it a regular place in their repertoire. So far, however, 1988 has been just one disaster after another for the Black side.

The scene of the troubles is the position reached after the moves: **1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3 + 6. bxc3 Ne7 7. Qg4 Qc7 8. Qxg7 Rg8 9. Qxh7 cxd4 10. Ne2 Nbc6 11. f4 dxc3 12. Qd3 Bd7** *See the diagram.* Over the years White has tried quite a few moves in this position (e.g., 13. Rb1, 13. h4, 13. Ng3). But it is not surprising that capture on c3 should be critical. White thereby confirms that he is a pawn ahead. He also has the two Bishops and an outside passed h-pawn that must be potent if it comes down to an endgame. Can Black really whip up enough counterplay to compensate for all this?

Let's look at 13. Nxc3 first, the obvious choice, threatening Nb5-d6 + . The latest word is **Korchnoi-Nogueiras, SWIFT World Cup 1988: 13. Nxc3 a6 14. Rb1** Karpov had this position in an earlier round against Nogueiras and managed to contain Black's play with 14. Ne2!? Nf5 15. Rb1 Nce7 16. Qc3 Bc6 17. Rg1 0-0-0 18. Nd4 Nxd4 19. Qxd4 Nf5 20. Qb6. The Cuban GM must have had an improvement ready. **Rc8** Going for c-file counterplay. But can Black hope to get by without connecting his Rooks? As 14...0-0-0? is a blunder because of 15. Qxa6, Black's alternative is to play 14...Na5 and only then castle long. **15. h4 Nf5 16. Rh2 Nce7 17. Bd2 Bc6 18. h5 Nh6 19. Rg3 Rxg3 20. Qxg3 Nef5 21. Qh3 d4 22. Nd1 Qd8 23. g4!?** A new move. Against Psakhis at Tallinn last year Uhlmann showed that 23. Nf2 Ne3! 24. Bxe3 dxe3 25. Qxe3 Nf5 gives Black good attacking chances. **Qh4 +** Black is the one playing for middlegame attack, so 23...Nh4 seems better on principle. The situation then is very unclear. Black's pieces are buzzing, yet the White pawns are a terrible menace. **24. Nf2 Qxh3 25. Bxh3 Nh4 26. f5 Nf3 + 27. Ke2** 27. Kd1! was certainly more accurate, though Black is in trouble now anyway. **Bd5 28. Rc1 Ng8?** Feeble. 28...Nxd2 29. Kxd2 Rc3 was the only way to fight on. **29. Bg2 Nxe5 30. Bxd5 exd5 31. h6** The move Winawer players have nightmares about. **Nf6 32. g5 Nh5 33. Rg1 Kf8 34. Kd1 Kg8 35. Ng4 Nf3 36. Rh1 Ng3 37. Nf6 + Kf8 38. Bb4 + 1-0.** 37...Kh8 38. g6! would just have taken a little longer.

There is also the capture with the queen on c3 as in **Karpov-Farago, Wijk aan Zee 1988** (from the diagram): **13. Qxc3 Nf5 14. Rb1 Rc8?** When will they learn? GMs are still playing this move, though the question mark comes from Moles (1975). Both 14...d4 and 14...0-0-0 are better. **15. Bd2 b6 16. g3 Qb7 17. Qd3 Nce7 18. Rg1 Rc4 19. g4 Nh4 20. Rg3 Qc8 21. Rb2** Although White's position is pretty ragged, Black fails to come up with anything dynamic during a slow and patient Karpovian process of consolidation. **Nhg6 22. Rf3 Nc6 23. Rf2 Rh8 24. h3 Qd8 25. Qg3 Qe7 26. Rf3 Qc5 27. Kd1 Ra4 28. Rc3 Qe7 29. Nc1 d4 30. Rcb3 Na5 31. Rb4** and, his initiative at an end, Black inevitably succumbed before superior material forces.

My own opinion is that Black's string of defeats is not due to any fundamental inadequacy in the defence, but to faulty strategy by the players. It is tempting for Black to play ...Rc8 and aim at the visible weakness on c2. But most of the time that target in the c-file is just a distraction. Black needs to remember that an attack is not likely to succeed without the power of connected Rooks behind it. So Rooks at c8 and g8 with the BK stuck on e8 is usually the wrong formation. There is a simple recipe for Black: castle on the Q-side and then rupture the centre with ...d4, ...f6 and ...e5. (Grasping this is much more important than memorising variations.) That was precisely what John Moles advocated back in 1975. It's very strange that active tournament players should still be failing to heed this advice.

Devoted readers will have noticed that last week we hopped over the solution to the Grasshopper problem given on 6 May. Using G/g for White/Black Grasshoppers, the position in Forsyth notation was: [8/4Gp2/2pK4/1pG5/4P3/2R1p1gB/Q2pk3/g1g2R2]. The composer was Jean-Pierre Boyer, and the solution (mate in 2): **1. Qd5** threatening 2. Qh5 mate. Particularly fine are the different mates awaiting different promotions on d1: 1...d1 = Q 2. Rxe3, 1...d1 = N 2. Rc2, 1...d1 = G + 2. Qa2.

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☐ Plymouth City Council is spending £60,000 on a giant sundial which will tell the wrong time. The sculpted sundial, with a 25ft high gnomon (point), is to be erected by the end of the month. Because it will be set for GMT, and Plymouth is behind Greenwich in solar time, it will be wrong in summer by an average of 77 minutes. An explanatory leaflet is being produced for visitors wanting to work out the right time. — *Observer* (Kathleen Hull)

☐ The five-year-old house which John and Simone Royal built for themselves at Sea Palling on the Norfolk coast has been listed by government experts as a 16th century building of special architectural and historic interest. — *Sunday Telegraph* (Gregory Tesser)

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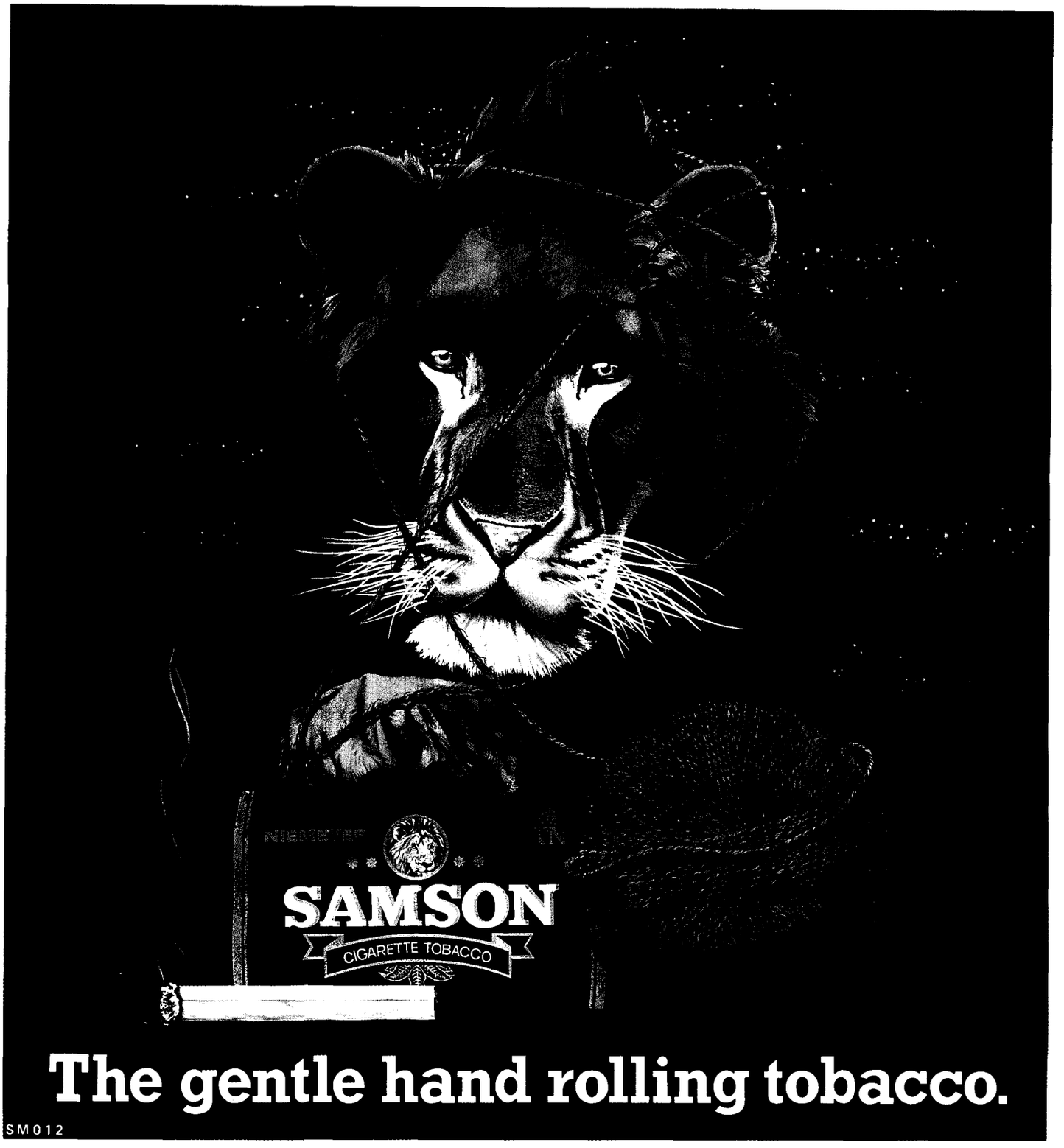

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